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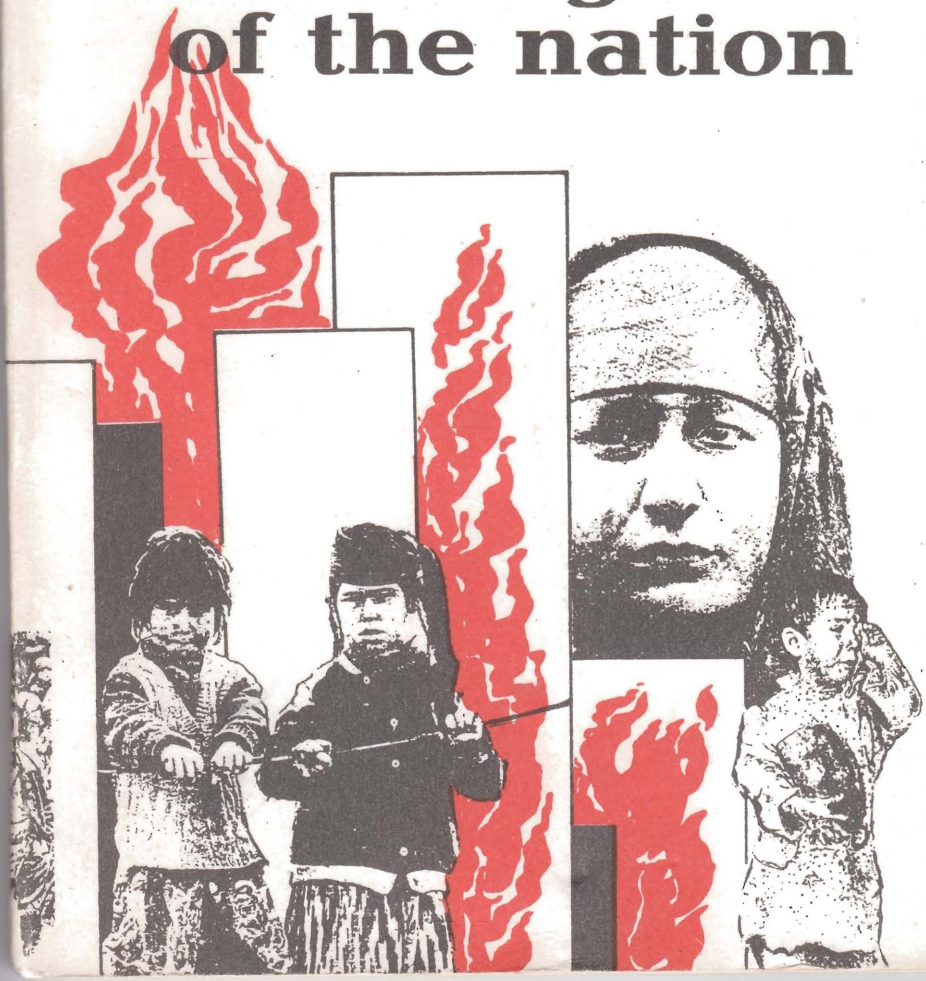
Tajikistan: tragedy and anguish of the nation



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Tajikistan: tragedy and anguish of the nation

1993

This book, meant for a wide range of readers, contains a thorough analysis of the situation in the present-day Tajikistan, a newly-sovereign republic, whose people were forced to shoulder the heavy burden of a civil war.

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READER!

This is a book about the events which have taken place in Tajikistan recentlly. Apart from historians, all citizens of this Republic took part in writing it.

The tragedy of Tajikistan is the tragedy of the whole region, of all the post-Soviet countries, presently sovereign states. Historical experience shows that wars which broke out in one region spread onto the neighbours like plague. Those wars resulted in thousands upon thousands of victims, drenching the land of ancestors with blood.

The developments in this mountainous country have provided some more evidence. And it was only the victory of progressive forces, and the triumph of common sense that has made it possible to consolidate the effort of many members of the Commonwealth of Independent States, which gained the long-awaited independence. The bloody massacre in Tajikistan unleashed by Islamic fundamentalists and their supporters has demonstrated once again how unstable this precious peace in our land is, and how we must cherish it.

Tajikistan is a mountainous country. Those who live in the valleys have always earned more and lived better, while the inhabitants of the Pamirs have been deprived of many benefits of civilization. The North and the South of the Republic differ both in culture and social consciousness. In Harma, for instance, culture is backward. The fundamentalists used this to their advantage. They set one group of people against another, promising them prosperity, and thus provoked massacre and pillage. In Harma a lot of Iranian carpets, Japanese TV-sets and western arms can be found now.

By arousing the most contemptible feelings, by giving a little and promising much more, they set the South against the North, the highlanders against the peasants. The result is here to be seen — thousands upon thou-

sands of killed and destitute people, burnt down houses and villages.

The fundamentalists cleverly used the obvious polarization of Tajikistan's population and the primitive mentality of some of its sections to seize power.

This book is a warning to all honest people. The Moslem religion appealing to peaceableness and high moral ideals has nothing to do with Islamic fundamentalism. The latter is always associated with blood, tears and suffering of innocent people.

Its main method of persuasion is the imposition of its views which may well be called neo-bolshevism. The principle of revolutionary expediency it employs, has the effect of the boomerang which strikes back on the one who has launched it. Fundamentalism is the most threadbare manifestation of it. It divides people into "categories". So, it is not surprising that in many Islamic countries which have chosen a progressive way of development, fundamentalism is prohibited by their constitutions.

Well, reader, what you are now reading is not a piece of fiction. This chronicle makes people think of where populist slogans of the so-called "democrats" can lead to. If you give in, if you recoil, the result will be chaos, bloodshed and tragedy of the people.

This book is an attempt to analyse the events on the basis of the latest facts. It is a pity to admit that few people know the truth about this tragedy, its masterminds and its main culprits. We do not claim absolute truth, we merely wish to lay bare the facts for you to draw your own conclusions. But we believe that one should strive for the truth and learn the lessons of the past lest it be repeated in some other state of Central Asia, or Russia.

It was not easy to write this book. It was dreadful to read the documents, to listen to the eye-witnesses of the horrors before which the deeds of Medieval inguisitors fade into nothingness. But we acted out of sympathy and concern for millions of people who got into trouble. We felt pity for the suffering of the people of Tajikistan who found themselves to be a plaything in the hands of political instigators at this tragic time.

We were outraged by the acts of those who spinned intrigues and manipulated puppets ready to shed the blood of their own people for thirty pieces of silver.

We had faith in our people who had gained their longed-for freedom and were bound to overcome the difficulties which fell to their lot. We know that the way to freedom and progress chosen by our people who have suffered so much is pure and noble. We are sure that our purpose is clear and nobody can mislead our people.

Unfortunately there will be more difficulties. Freedom is never possible without struggle. The enemies of renovation and progress of Tajikistan have not reconciled themselves to their defeat yet, and their supporters are nurturing hopes of revenge.

However, the people who have once tasted freedom can never be forced down on their knees again, especially if they have reliable supporters.

CONFRONTATION: COINCIDENCE OR REGULARITY?

Thousands of innocent people killed and rendered destitute. Anguish and suffering that will remain in our hearts for many years. All that took place in Tajikistan. A tragedy of the state, a tragedy of the people. And just a short while ago it was a prosperous and flourishing country. But this superficial well-being was transformed into hell, as if Allah himself had cursed this land. Civil war... The history of mankind has known no tragedy more terrible, when brother kills brother, father kills son, neighbour kills neighbour, and your own compatriots resort to most brutal methods of murdering their likes. In the villages near Kurgan-Tyube, people often see a boy in torn clothes and always hungry, bereft of reason. He witnessed his father's and mother's murder and his sister's rape. He was also doomed, but managed to escape. More than half a year has passed since that terrible day on which happened a most terrible thing — this thirteen-year-old boy went mad. And it is the kindness of different people — Tajiks, Russians, Uzbeks and Kirghizs — that saves him from starvation. However terrible this may sound, no one knows which is better for this young miserable soul: to wander about kishlaks in search of a piece of bread or to meet the fate of his parents. Like thousands of other Tajiks, he is a victim of fanaticism, that can never be justified.

Here is the evidence of eye-witnesses to the events — journalists of the "Izvestiya" newspaper.

..."Kurgan-Tyube, Aini street. A check — point of a Russian motorized unit on one side of the street, apartment houses — on the other. Midday. Not a living soul in the street. A corpse that has been lying there for two days already. Some distance away — another one. No

one can steal up to them, because the street in under cross fire of sharp-shooters.

However, in Dushanbe it is quiet for the present. The market-places are crowded, and there are a lot of dressed-up people in the streets, though the President of Tajikistan is on the run. No one knows for sure about the events taking place in the neighbouring Kurgan-Tyube just 80 km away.

As we were told by people vested with power, we could only get there by an armoured vehicle or a helicopter. The venturesome driver, whom we found at a bus station, made up his mind to risk his life and his battered "Zhiguli" for 2,500 roubles. But even he failed to take us to Kurgan-Tyube. At a State motor-vehicle inspection post, some twenty kilometres off the city, all cars with Dushanbe licence-plates were forced to turn back. Later, we had the good luck of getting on one of the "Ikarus" buses. We were invited by the head of the group. We fell into a conversation with him.

— I am going to Kurgan-Tyube to take my family and those women and children who have survived the carnage. The buses were hired with my own money. Here are the documents — 11,760 roubles. And nobody wanted to help. So, the three of us are here: the driver, my brother and I. We have neither guards nor any hope of success.

First the town looked peaceful. However, suspiciously empty streets and the sounds of a close skirmish dispelled all doubts in a moment.

Everything here reminded one of the war that has been going on for several days. Armoured troop carriers with their sides scratched by bullets, emaciated armed people in spotted uniforms who, despite their resemblance, turned out to be divided into two groups: the local militia and fighters of the Separate Republican Special Task Battalion. At the outset of the events militiamen in Kurgan-Tyube fell into two parts: those who supported the President and mostly came from Kulyab, left the building of the Internal Affairs Administration. Others stayed and declared their neutrality. Militiamen and members of the Special Task Militia Detachment do not trust each other, and expect nothing better than dirty tricks, betrayal and shots at the back from their former colleagues. However, all of them took close to heart the events of that morning, when 15 disfigured corpses tied up with wire were found on the bottom of a nearby dried

canal. Four of them were identified as employees of the Internal Affairs Department.

Another round of war began in this locality on Wednesday, September 2. On that day the President's supporters gathered on the Square in front of the Regional Executive Committee. Most of them were from Kulyab. Further events developed as follows.

As one of Kulyab leaders, Sangak Safarov, was making a speech, an armed opposition detachment surrounded participants in the meeting and opened fire. According to eye-witnesses, the action had been thoroughly planned. Simultaneously, the opposition, supported by armoured vehicles, seized the most vital places in the town. Snipers took positions on the roofs of multi-storeyed buildings and in the windows of blocks of flats. Some people hid themselves in the building of the Regional Executive Committee, while others were driven aside. Shooting began in the streets of the town and the local self-defence detachment had to join the fighting. Soon it was supported by another small grooup. The forces were obviously unequal. It proved impossible to hold Urgut, and thousands of refugees rushed under the protection of the Russian regiment, into the nearby Lomonosovo village. More than 10 thousand homeless people gathered here: Tajiks, Uzbeks, Tatars, Kirghizs and Russians. All avenues of approach were guarded by Russian officers.

The situation is really terrible. Fighting has been going on the city since then. Detachments of the opposition are consolidating their success. The city has been divided into parts where purges are underway. At first we saw small groups of sub-machine-gunners and an armour-plated KAMAZ truck shooting somewhere above the heads of the people. Those were followed by a chain of armed people who searched buildings and divided "friends" from "enemies".

The officers and soldiers of the regiment took position and watched them, but did not interfere. The unit was closely surrounded by snipers, equipped, as it turned out, with night-vision instruments. But in spite of that not a single shot was fired by the regiment in return.

The only place which the opposition troops have not entered yet, is Lomonosovo village. Russian armoured personnel carriers are holding them in check. There are families of officers and refugees in the village. Thirty to forty people are sharing each flat here. They live cooped

up, constantly fearing what to expect of tomorrow. The sparse protection line cannot guarantee full safety. On the day of our arrival some unknown men slaughtered the family of ensign Kasymov.

Says uncle Mirzo Gulov, also an ensign in the local missile battalion:

— Nine people were killed including his wife, his wife's father, his son, brothers and brothers-in-law. His baby was scalped. There was blood everywhere. I could not take their corpses until night. The house was under the fire of snipers. We managed to do it under the protection of an armoured carrier only at night. The most terrible thing is that my nephew doesn't know anything. One of these days he is coming back from Germany after doing his military service.

In the evening a stranger who introduced himself as a representative of the Salvation Union rang up the commander of the regiment and said: "Your soldiers in an armoured carrier killed a whole family, everybody knows it and you will regret this fact".

Today there is neither authority nor justice in the town. Nobody knows the exact number of victims. Most corpses haven't been removed yet. They are lying in the streets and irrigation ditches half decomposed from this awful heat. Hundreds of people are missing. Nobody knows whether they have been killed or captured as hostages, or are hiding in the cellars of the plundered houses. Fires and marauding are pestering the city.

The situation in the country-side is the same. The Vahsh Valley, the richest and the most fertile one, is no longer what it used to be in the old days. There is constant fighting everywhere. Vineyards have been trampled down, houses plundered, settlements burnt down. There are hundreds of mutilated and disfigured corpses and a lot of armoured men everywhere, who seem to be subordinate to no one. It is across this valley, along a narrow road, the last one connecting Lomonosovo with the outside world, that we are going to a hospital in Kalininabad.

Twenty three seriously wounded men were brought there yesterday and 14 today. Yusuf Mizirov, a surgeon, has shown us the operating room. There are three wounded men already and two of them are going to have their legs amputated. More wounded men keep coming all the time. Our young guide Djumahon Ergashev from Kulyab

has suddenly recognized his brother Kabir on one of the operating tables. Kabir has a bad wound, but the most terrible thing is that his eye has been knocked out. A young nurse takes our hands and pulls us along into a ward, where a small boy is lying on a bed.

"It's my son", she says and takes the blanket off. The child has lost his right hand. Three-years old Ingon Davronov had answered the door bell and was knocked down by a burst of fire. A teenager lying next to him, had bruises all over his body. He was found on the road.

Unheard-of cruelty has become a common occurrence in these places. It seems that skilled professionals with long practice are trying to humiliate people in every possible way. They scalp them, take out the brains of a living person through a little hole in the head and tear out their finger-nails. Well-trained mercinaries are taking part in military operations, as well as Afghan units. We have come across the documents of one of them, killed in fighting".

Those were excerpts from reports by "Izvestiya" correspondents, published in the beginning of September. As many as 4 months passed since floodshed had begun, but for the first time since then our numerous periodicals published an article which more or less truthfully told us about the civil war in Tajikistan. However, no attempt was made to find out who was fighting against whom.

To understand the reasons for this national catastrophe, we have to return into the not so distant past.

It is customary to believe that the starting point of the tragic events in Tajikistan was the rally in Shakhidon Square in the centre of Dushanbe which began in April 1992. Formally, this is true. But the terrible seed of the Tajik tragedy had been dropped onto the fertile soil long before that. The civil war which took a huge toll of human lives was only a natural outcome of the feud between local clans and groupings, and later on — between Islamic fundamentalists and supporters of the lawfully elected authorities. War to the death, with the use of most cruel and sadistic methods was the logical outcome of the fight for power.

As for the real reasons of the civil war in Tajikistan, the only conclusion that can be drawn is that it was the war of two ideologies: the struggle between the

ideology of fundamentalism and the ideology of a secular state. Seventy years were enough for the people of the republic to appreciate the advantages of the secular way of development, and they opted for this way in spite of most cruel and cunning attempts to force them back to medieval obscurantism. In fact, Tajikistan has become a touchstone, a test of the choice made by the young Central Asian states.

Under the former system Tajikistan was considered to be a kind of a "quiet out-of-the-way place", with no serious inter-ethnic or economic problems. Such an illusory picture was created by the former central authorities. To enhance this image, they sent here money and specialists, who were mostly engaged in the construction of gigantic power stations. The first alarming signal was heard in the middle of the 80s when the budget deficit and the economic crisis started to aggravate.

Reasons for that were similar to those in the other republics of the region: the rupture of economic ties with deliverers, and obvious signs of a political crisis in the disintegrating USSR. All these things had an extremely negative effect on common people. The living standards began to fall dramatically and there appeared the first unemployed. For the sake of justice it should be mentioned that there had always been a lot of them in Tajikistan. A high density of the population, an acute shortage of fertile soil, and the absence of any industry in the Pamirs, Kulyab, Kurgan-Tyube and Harma gave no opportunities to thousands of young people to find application for their energy and strength.

Naturally, all these factors caused displeasure among the people. The administration couldn't solve these problems for some objective as well as subjective reasons.

At that time K. Makhkamov was the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tajikistan.

Born in the Leninabad region, he was rather a good economist and a kind and compliant person by nature. His closest associates took advantage of these traits of his character.

The second Secretary of the Central Committee P. Luchinsky, appointed to this mountainous region and vested with great powers by Moscow, contributed his bit to increasing the critical tendencies. Within his province was the selection and appointment of personnel. In

Tajikistan, with its many clans, the power to appoint people to various posts was appreciated very much. And it was in this field that Moscow's protege, ignorant of national traditions and specific local character, committed a lot of follies.

However, to do justice to him, it should be pointed out that he did not permit any "cotton lawsuits" in the Republic, plenty of which were staged in the neighbouring Uzbekistan. This should be taken into account.

It is common knowledge that the East requires subtle approaches, and Luchinsky failed to penetrate into the subtleties of the struggle for power. Unintentionally, he upset the established balance of power which led to an acute political struggle and caused displeasure and dissatisfaction both in the south and the north of the republic.

K. Makhkamov failed to offer any effective resistance to his deputy. His policy of appeasement and fear to stand in conflict to the protege of the "centre" gave a pretext to the opposition to announce that the Kremlin was unable to govern Tajikistan.

Eventually it caused an acute political crisis, personal hostility, squabbles, and loss of mutual understanding in higher echelons of power. The state structure created in the course of decades, showed signs of cracking in Dushanbe in February 1990.

There cannot be any vaccuum in political life. An opposition began to emerge in the republic. The political club "Face to Face" in Kulyab became one of its main centres, which was frequented by Party and komsomol members and prominent functionaries. Having great influence on the mass media, and possessing some compromising materials, they openly called for removing the corrupt government.

Under the new conditions, national consciousness of the Tajik people was growing. The same was true about the other republics. In spite of certain recommendations to this end, Party and Soviet bodies proved incapable of following them and channelling the people's energy into construction, and not into destruction. The opposition attributed the awakening of the people's activity to its own credit, describing the republic's leadership as the mouthpiece of the interests of Russia and the Kremlin. Publications accusing the local authorities of a poor knowledge of the mother tongue, national history and

culture, appeared now and then. Representatives of the authorities didn't dare enter into open polemics with the opposition leaders, thus losing the battle without actually having joined it.

Rustam Abdurakhimov was among the most ardent advocates of democratic changes in Tajikistan. He was one of the organizers of the Political Club. But his euphoria over the newly-gained freedom soon waned. He grew keenly conscious of the fact that all the democratic parties and movements had become a means through which Islamic fundamentalists were striving to achieve their selfish goals.

Later Abdurakhimov said: "The opposition in Tajikistan began its preparation for the terror tactics in 1978. The Kazikalon (head of the Tajik Moslems) appointed his supporters to high posts in nearly all the mosques, thus turning them into strong points of fundamentalism. For instance, in one mosque 200 bottles of explosives, automatic guns and a large amounts of hard currency were found.

Mullah Abdugaffor, for one, was rearing murderers and drug addicts".

In October 1992 Rustam Abdurakhimov was brutally murdered in a mosque. In that savage way fundamentalists squared accounts with their ideological opponent.

They had spied on him for a long time, and despite strict precautions he fell into the clutches of his enemies. He was brought to a mosque. First, they cut off his hands. His blood was collected in a bowl and he was forced to drink it. Then, they put out his eyes, and submachine-gunned him crosswise shouting "You have sold yourself to the Russians. Here's their cross for you". That was their way of dealing with those who dared oppose them.

Beginning with B. Gaphurov, top leaders of the republic had been traditionally chosen from among representatives of the Leninabad region, a highly developed area.

Over the past 30 or 40 years, all first secretaries of the Central Committee, as well as other high officials, came from Khoujand, while there were few representatives of the Southern regions of the republic among the leaders. They had to put up with such a state of things for the time being, the more so as there were no influential personalities among them. But by the late 80s and the

early 90s, some sections of the population in the South of the republic, especially the intelligentsia, had grown resentful of the distribution of forces that had existed for decades. The aspirations of the intelligentsia for playing a more important role in the Republic's policies were whipped up by their countrymen in the high echelons of power who hoped to strengthen their own positions. Makhkamov's weak attempts to reduce this pressure by reshuffling the cadres failed to yield the expected results. On the contrary, repeated changes had evoked antagonism on the part of southerners, who thought that they were being humiliated. That led to a stronger confrontation between the South and the North, instead of easing it. In February 1990 they managed to avoid slaughter. But the opposition went underground and started to reform its ranks and work out new strategies. The goal was quite definite — to seize power.

By that time several powerful political parties and movements had been formed. One of them was the movement called "Rastohez" which advocated restoration of the national culture, language and traditions. It mostly comprised young intellectuals. It was the leaders of this organization who began to raise territorial claims, stating that Bukhara and Samarkand must belong to Tajikistan.

The motto of the Democratic party of Tajikistan was to create a law-governed democratic secular state. This party rejected violence and brutality as a means of achieving its political goals. Inhabitants of the Gorno-Badahshan autonomous region were rallied under the banners of the movement "Laali-Badahshon". The political aims of this movement were quite obvious — to fight for obtaining high posts in the leadership of Tajikistan. All these parties and movements were granted an official status by the state. But each of these political parties was under a strong influence of the Islamic Party of Rebirth, which was categorically denied registration by Makhkamov. Numerous and possessing a strong financial support, the IPR had but one aim — the creation of an Islamic state according to the Iranian pattern.

Disintegration of the USSR struck hard on the political climate in Tajikistan. In August 1991 K. Makhkamov made himself vulnerable by supporting the plotters and had to resign from the President's post. The opposition obtained a real chance for seizing power. But it needed a leader, somebody neutral. Another very important

condition was to be observed — the top powers should be headed traditionally by somebody who came from the North of the republic. The choice fell on Rahmon Nabiev. With the support of the leading parties and movements he was elected a deputy of the Republic's Supreme Soviet. The mass media launched a massive compaign to create an image of a person calling for genuine independence of Tajikistan and people's prosperity. The publication contained the same clear-cut idea: weak-willed K. Makhkamov must be replaced by strong-willed R. Nabiev. There is no doubt that Nabiev was strongly supported both by the kaziat and the Islamic Party of Rebirth. He suited their aims for the transition period. However it was clear even then that Nabiev was nothing but a pawn in the game of Tajikistan's so-called reorganizers. He was destined to play the role of a transition figure-head and then — to resign.

But as soon as the goal was reached and K. Makhkamov resigned, the opposition rejected R. Nabiev as if to show who was the real ruler. He had fulfilled the role assigned to him by enforcing the registration of the Islamic Party of Rebirth. The way to the political summit was open now. Yet, fundamentalists failed to subdue the Parliament. Rahmon Nabiev was elected its Speaker. It was then that rallies were organized in the squares of Dushanbe. As if on orders, and such was really the case, camp towns were set up for people brought from far-away villages. There is one fact testifying to how splendidly this action was arranged: teams from different regions were assigned to particular places in the square.

There arises a questions: why didn't R. Nabiev suit the opposition? The answer lies in the political distribution of forces.

He came from the North, and there, fundamentalists enjoyed no support. Leninabad residents had well-grounded reasons to be anxious about the prospects for the Iranian way of development and a possible alliance with Afghanistan and Iran. The situation came to a stalemate. On behalf of the Russian leadership A. Sobchak and E. Velikhov arrived in the capital of the mountainous Republic to settle this situation.

Now, when some time has passed, we can say that their "peace-making mission" had the opposite effect. They failed to understand the situation. The envoys of the Russian President mostly supported the opposition

wishing to see it as an active democratic movement in the struggle against communists. Fundamentalists took advantage of that situation. Quoting those excerpts from Sobchak's and Velikhov's statements which suited them, they began an active propaganda compaign. It all boiled down to this: Russia is on our side.

In their struggle for power they counted on Akbarsho Iskandarov, a Supreme Soviet Deputy Chairman and Chairman of the Soviet of the Gorno-Badahshan autonomous region. Besides that, fundamentalists wanted to get a reliable support in future from those proud and bellicose Pamir people.

Such was the distribution of forces on the eve of the elections of the President of Tajikistan. Davlat Hudonazarov was another popular man in Tajikistan who had to play an important role in the forthcoming marathon for getting top political power. A famous film-director, a former USSR People's Deputy, and a member of the inter-regional group of deputies which used to include the present Russian leaders, he wanted to pose as a man of principle and an energetic public figure in his native republic. The central and the Russian mass media contributed their share to creating his image. By all appearances, his election as the Chairman of the USSR Union of Film-makers played a certain role in it.

In the course of the pre-election campaign in Tajikistan this public figure was constantly contrasted to R. Nabiev who had a purely Communist background.

Could Khudonazarov become the leader of Tajikistan? That was hardly possible! He made some tactical mistakes. Coming from the Pamirs, Khudonazarov was supported by the Islamic Party of Rebirth and consequently, by most southerners. Excessive confidence in his powers and underestimation of the influence of the North and the predominant mentality of Tajiks who trusted only powerful personalities, prevented him from taking the post of the President of Tajikistan on November 24, 1991. By the way, his second attempt to become the head of this sovereign state last year was doomed to failure too. An attempt on Khudonazarov's life was made in July. A lorry ran into his car. By a lucky chance, he happened to be elsewhere at the moment.

There are two versions concerning the attempt. The first one has it that the attempt was made by hirelings of the Islamic Party of Rebirth to whom allies with

democratic ideas who had already done what they could for it, became a burden. The second one says that the accident was staged by Khudonazarov's adherents, trying to raise his political rating in the course of the pre-election struggle.

By the way, this method had passed a test in Russia, and not only there. Well, in spite of strong counteraction by the opposition forces, Rahmon Nabiev became the legitimate President of Tajikistan at the end of November. It seemed that the purpose had been achieved, and the time had come for stabilizing the social and political situation. But it was at this point that the new Tajik leader showed his true face. He was sure that after gaining power, he would inherit automatically absolute subordination to the will of "the First", which had existed before, when the system itself reliably guaranteed the functioning of various spheres of the Republic's life. Those sweet illusions were shattered by reality. The situation had radically changed. Life demanded a clever, firm and competent leader who could control the situation. Nabiev was not ready to work under new conditions because of lack of character, knowledge or talent for organization.

Appreciating personal devotion of those who surrounded him more than anything else, he began with giving out posts to his relatives and friends. He declared at all levels that there were no pre-conditions for increasing confrontation in Tajikistan, and that life in the Republic was normal. He said it though he knew that the situation was critical, the opposition was gaining popularity, arms were being accumulated in mosques, intensive training of fighting units was going on, and submachine-guns, grenade throwers and money were being delivered from Afghanistan, Iran, Saudi Arabia under the guise of assistance.

Employees of law-rotection bodies informed him many times that Dushanbe and other cities in the South of the republic were swarming with shady businessmen from Iran and Afghanistan. Colossal material resources were concentrated in their hands. One could buy a Homeyni's portrait and his "teachings" in any book-shop of the capital at a suitable price. Various strata of society had pro-Iranian feelings. After the Law on the State Language had been adopted, it became fashionable among the intellectuals to speak with a slight Iranian accent.

Nationalistic feelings and increasing stratification on ethnic grounds didn't bother the carefree leader. Inhabi-

tants of Harma and the Pamirs claimed to play the exclusive role in the republic. They forced those who came from the North, out of the capital, the Kurgan-Tyube and the Kulyab regions, taking the key posts in trade and the system of distribution. Statements about a special role that should be played by Tajiks from the Southern regions began to sound more often. They were made by so-called saviours of the nation. Those who came from the North and were as a rule high-skilled specialists and traditional supporters of the structures of power, were considered aliens.

"Cross the pass back home!"— such utterances could be heard in the streets and public transport in Dushanbe. Tajiks were forcing out Tajiks. The thesis of the purity of the nation began to sound louder.

Politicans were splitting the nation more and more. And common people, who couldn't make out anything, kept silent.

But that wasn't new. The so-called policy of expansion of the northern neighour, Uzbekistan, had been spoken about for a long time. At the close of the eighties a regional scientific conference on inter-ethnic relations was held in Tashkent. An impressive delegation of scholars came from Dushanbe to take part in it. It was then that they decided to give their first "battle" and greatly surprised all the participants in the forum. Their claims boiled down to the "unjust", in their opinion, national-and-state demarcation of 1924—1925.

More was to follow. At the end of 1991 the book "History of Crude Demarcation" by Rahim Masov was published in a large edition in Dushanbe. The author alleged that Tajiks living in Uzbekistan were oppressed. It was not surprising that the book was a success among the Tajik intelligentsia. It had been looked forward to for a long time, and not only in Tajikistan. In short, all those were links in the same chain.

And what about Tajiks themselves? Why are the opposition leaders still trying to prove their exclusiveness? It is impossible to understand the reasons for the sanguinary civil war, which has thrown the republic several decades back, without answering this question.

It should be pointed out that the leaders made the above statements for propaganda purposes. Actually, they were of a different opinion. Once Shodmon Yusuf said

that there was no Tajik people, but there was Persian-speaking population.

The regions populated exclusively by Tajiks are mainly situated in the mountains of Tajikistan and the upper reaches of the Zeravshan river. On the rest of the Republic's territory Tajiks live alternately with other peoples (Uzbeks, Kirghizs, Russians). On the low-lands, in the mountain foothills in the south-western part of the republic, in eastern Karateghin, and also in the North of the country most people are of foreign extraction. A great number of Tajiks live in Afghanistan. They live in Iran, North Pakistan and China as well. It is highly important to see the difference between high-landers and the rest of the Tajik population to understand the ethnic situation in Tajikistan. They differ from those who live on the flat-lands, in their language, religion, and way of life. The main thing is that those who live in the Pamirs are ismailites and not sunnites like all the other Tajiks. During the rule of Uzbek dynasties in Central Asia on the territory of the present-day Tajikistan, there existed some separate feudal estates — khanates, or principalities, both Uzbek and Tajik. When Central Asia was conquered by Russia at the end of the previous century, some regions with the Tajik population, (Ura-Tyube, Hudjund, Matcha, Falgar) fell under the Russian rule, while some others, like Kulyab, Guissar, Karateghin and Darvas), were subjugated by the Emir of Bukhara with the assistance of the tsarist government and became a province in the Bukhara Khanate, which existed till 1921.

At that time regions near the Pamirs were in a somewhat other position. The Western Pamirs, for instance, was split into semi-dependent principalities. A stubborn struggle for those regions which resulted in the establishment of the Russian rule, was followed by long-term negotiations between Russia and England. In 1895 a treaty on the demarcation between Afghanistan and Russia in the Pamirs was concluded. The boundary mostly coincided with the Pyanje River. That was how close relatives found themselves in different states.

Such is history. However, all attempts to make a fair copy of some of its pages never led to good results. On the contrary, under the guise of national self-consciousness double-dyed nationalism was flourishing, and tragic situations arose time and again drenching that land with the blood of innocent people.

So, the myth about the exclusiveness of Southern Tajiks and their "blue, Aryan blood" is nothing else but an attempt of the opposition parties to rally the poorest strata of the population under their banners, infecting them with fanatical ideas and preparing them for barbaric actions, prompted by their leaders. The Pamirians traditionally did unskilled work on the flat-lands. They erected fences, made clay bricks, and tilled kitchen gardens to earn their living. The poorest and the least educated part of the population of the mountainous regions turned to be susceptible to the slogans of fundamentalists, who promised them a better life.

It's appropriate to recall some historical facts. The so-called "basmatch" bands fought in the Pamirs till 1936. Alas! The leaders of the former Soviet Union who unleashed the war in Afghanistan had not learnt their lesson. The Afghan war was lost, and it couldn't be otherwise, just like the fact that England, once mistress of the world and seas, had been crushed in the Pamir mountains as well.

It's also appropriate to appeal to figures. The Gorno-Badahshan autonomous region, which has now become a republic within Tajikistan, has always depended a 100% on the import of industrial goods, and about 80%— on the import of food-stuffs.

Absence of industry and insufficient infrastructure doomed high-landers to misery. "Handouts" from the centre couldn't fully satisfy the needs of the numerous inhabitants of the region. And they had nothing else to do but to engage in risky but very profitable drug trafficking. It's common knowledge that even during the period of the so-called "developed socialism" drugs were smuggled from here to Russia, Ukraine and the Baltic Republics. There were no problems with their transportation. It was possible to reach the "Roof of the World", as the Pamirs is called, in autumn and winter only by a helicopter. There also existed secret trails. It's not worth while even mentioning feeble attempts to undermine drug trafficking. The leaders who came from the North, never paid much attention to obstinate and proud high-landers. The only task of functionaries was to supply the mountainous region with goods and food-stuffs. And come what may!

However, such an approach to the problem didn't satisfy Pamirians themselves. Social infringement and

isolation from active political life aroused their national consciousness, deeply mingled with religion. Threats to the leadership in Dushanbe were most often heard from Horog: "If there are no high posts for our representatives, Gorny Badahshan will have to resort to tough measures!"

What did those threats imply? Pamirians were not united in their views, tactics and strategy. The "Laali-Badahshan" movement, aimed at consolidating the high-landers and attaining representation in the high echelons of state powers, failed to work out a common plan.

As a matter of fact, politicians from the "Roof of the world" proposed three ways of development. The first one was complete autonomy within Tajikistan, the second one suggested protectorate by Russia (there were certain manipulations with history here again, based on the Anglo-Russian treaty signed at the end of the previous century); and finally, the third one proposed inclusion into a new geo-political space orientated towards Iran and Afghanistan. Adherents of the third way turned out to be in a majority. It was not coincidental. The Islamic Party of Rebirth had chosen that mountainous region long ago for an active popularization of its ideas. Poisonous seeds yielded a rich harvest on the "Roof of the World". Fundamentalists maintained that only those who spoke Persian were true Moslems. They stated that the Turkish-speaking countries and the northern part of Tajikistan, where a lot of Uzbeks and Kirghizs lived, couldn't be considered truly Islamic. People living there vere regarded as adherents of western ideas and traitors of Islam. They called for putting an end to the "dictatorship of Hudjand". They convinced Pamirians that they were true masters of the world. Fundamentalists reminded high-landers of their isolation from their relatives living on the other bank of the Pyanje, and they blamed it on the communist leadership of Dushanbe that obeyed Moscow.

Naturally, they also used other propoganda methods. One of them was speculation on economic questions. They convinced Pamirians that they were dragging out a miserable existence while false Moslems in Kurgan-Tyube, Hudjand and Dushanbe erected mansions for themselves, drove expensive cars and enjoyed luxury while the laws of the Shariat never allow any new-comers to rule the land of true Moslems.

It's necessary to clear out some points. Why do fundamentalists blame only those who live in these cities? The reason is that most industrial enterprises and scientific and cultural establishments are concentrated there. It is these cities and regions that have always provided the national income and ensured a tolerable life for the backward regions like Gorny Badahshan.

Besides that, about 40% of Russian-speaking inhabitants, a lot of Uzbeks and northern Tajiks lived in Dushanbe before these tragic events. As for Kurgan-Tyube, fundamentalists took a special dislike for it due to the fact that this district was inhabited mainly by the Turkish-speaking population at the beginning of the century.

It's common knowledge that an intensive development of the Vahsh valley began in the 30s, and great numbers of Tajiks and Uzbeks vere brought there from the Ferghana valley. Kulyabians, Pamirians and representatives of other ethnic groups were sent there as well. As a result, the Kurgan-Tyube region has a multi-national population. Under the former strictly centralized rule life was quiet enough here. However, the tendency towards animosity between different ethnic groups and clans could be discerned already then. The region was being intensively inhabited by people from the Harma regions and the Pamirs. The more numerous they became, the more persistently they claimed the leading role. Having failed to occupy leading posts, they gained control of the transport and trade, the spheres that had always brought much profit.

As a result, the opposition of clans, aggravated by politicians and the mafia, was distinctly noticeable at the beginning of 1992.

What was the reaction of Hudjand like? The ancient city where trade and industry were concentrated, where people's living standards were much higher in comparison with the other regions of Tajikistan, couldn't remain indifferent to the coming tragedy.

Northern leaders foresaw the development of sanguinarary events and exerted every effort to prevent them. How was it done?

The Leninabad region and its centre occupy an advantageous geographical position as compared to the other regions of Tajikistan. One can reach the region

only by the Anzob Mountain Pass. So, as regards its geographical position, the region was protected from the penetration of opposition forces. Besides, public sentiments in the region differed from those in southern and mountainous districts. People living in the Leninabad region remembered the Ferghana events of 1989, when blood of innocent people was shed. Moreover they had drawn correct conclusions from them. Living close to Kokand, Ferghana and Marghilan, they naturally feared that the disturbances would affect Hujand. But the fire of international discord in the neighbouring part of Uzbekistan was put out, and the murderers were punished. The people of the peace — loving and flourishing Hujand sympathized with the progressive forces of Uzbekistan and approved of the resoluteness with which their neighbours dealt with the disaster that befell that republic.

But there was no concrete answer to the main question: who was the organizer of the crimes? A lot of versions were put forward, but the inhabitans of Hujand were sure that those crimes were the deed of Islamic fundamentalists. They had chosen Ferghana as a "proving range" for their theories.

Such are the facts. As for political influence on Tajikistan, people from the Leninabad region traditionally occupied leading posts in higher bodies of state power. That was justified, for Hujand supplied Dushanbe with clever and astute politicians who didn't approve of isolation from Hujand's closest neighbours: developed Uzbekistan and Kirghizstan, though the latter did not play any sinificant role in the balance of forces. Northerners couldn't allow any infringement on their interests in the capital of Tajikistan. The ruling clique of the Islamic Party of Rebirth was worried by the fact that the inhabitants of the Leninabad region did not support the slogans and appeals of the "Rastokhez" movement and the Democratic Party whose leaders were strongly influenced by fundamentalists. Northerners, like a tortoise, preferred to stay under the protection of the test of their boundaries. Forestalling the events, it should be said that the attempts of fundamentalists to organize rallies in Hujand were doomed to failure. Their supporters were dispersed not only by the militia but the inhabitants of the district as well.

The so-called "reformers" realized that the North wasn't their sphere of influence and made up their minds to concentrate their forces in the South and the capital of Tajikistan. Drawing parallels is a dubious thing, but fundamentalists proceeded from Lenin's principle: "Get involved into a fight, and come what may!"

What did Leninabaders come for? How did they see the Republic's future? It's impossible to obtain a clear-cut answer. "No to the civil war!"— this motto was backed by representatives of all political groups in the North. However, some leaders favoured a settlement in the nature of a compromise, thinking it a better solution to lose a number of high posts and decrease their influence in the political sphere; while others, more wavering, wanted to gain autonomy, secede from Tajikistan permiated with Islamic ideas, and join the economically strong and stable Uzbekistan.

Going back to what has been said, it's necessary to point out the following. The main reason for the bloody events in Tajikistan was not the confrontation between Harma, the Pamir region and the North. It was an important factor, but nevertheless, a secondary one.

Fundamentalists who strived for power together with the mafia and took advantage of an opportunity which offered itself, were the true culprits of the tragedy.

And what about Rahmon Nabiev? Were his actions adequate in that situation?

He made blunder after blunder trying to please everyone. Left and right he was giving out high posts and flirting with the opposition. His political myopia and inability to forecast the situation is proved by the fact that the Ministry of Internal Affairs had practically fallen apart by the beginning of 1992.

On his recommendation, the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan was headed by Navdjuvanov, a native of the Pamirs, who didn't conceal his pro-Iranian sentiments. He supervised the staff, sanctioned the division of employees on grounds of nationality. At the beginning of April, when the rallies in the Shahidon Square in Dushanbe began, units of the Ministry of Internal Affairs lost their fighting efficiency, and ceased to fulfil their functions. That was exactly what the opposition wanted, and Navdjuvanov played a major role in that affair. Having declared neutrality, he acted on

instructions from the Kazikalon and the Islamic Party of Rebirth, who wished to disrupt the functioning of the law-inforcement bodies.

Similar things took place in the National Security Committee. For a long time it was headed by General Petkel who had been sent to Dushanbe by the former central authorities. The opposition mass media dealt a destructive blow on it in February, 1990. Similar events occurred during the next months as well. The very course of events prompted to Tajikistan's leadership that it was necessary to appoint a native professional to this high post. Then the grounds for criticism would no longer exist. However, General Petkel was replaced by General Stroikin invited from Kazakhstan.

Naturally, the newcomer aroused irritation among the opposition. Actually, he wasn't able to see through the tangled situation. All this split the bodies of state security.

Rahmon Nabiev, without even suspecting it, was deprived of two main agencies of the state system: the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Security Committee. In point of fact, an active process of disintegration of the power structures began in Tajikistan as early as the beginning of 1991. The country was falling into an abyss of chaos.

This conclusion may be confirmed by another fact. Well before the beginning of the May events, an active migration of the population, mostly Russian-speaking, began from Dushanbe. Ordinary people, who were so far from political intrigues and confrontation, realized that a civil war was imminent in the mountain districts and a peaceful outcome was impossible!

There were important enough prerequisites for it. In the republic, especially in its capital, a lot of independent periodicals began to be published. Incidentally, energetic and keen young men, who had fought in Afghanistan, worked there. Most of them worked as translators at various Soviet missions during the war on the opposite bank of the Pyanje River. They returned home with contradictory feelings, because, on the one hand, they saw blood and suffering that war had brought onto the territory of their southern neighbour. And on the other hand, they saw dedication and persistence of Islamic fighters. The Soviet upbringing and national self-consciousness clashed, and a paralysis of state power in

their home country and a possibility of rising to the top and becoming part of the elite, pushed them towards the opposition.

Moreover the opposition paid all its "supporters" well.

Here are some examples. More than once groups of "independent" journalists went on business trips to Iran sponsored by opposition parties. They were among those who made a pilgrimage to Mecca. Such a trip costs thousands of dollars according to the prices of 1991. There were other ways of encouragement. Various stypends and prizes were instituted to be awarded to the most "democratic" authors. The opposition was gaining popularity, while Rahmon Nabiev with his new team was losing it.

The empty "ideological space" was being effectively filled by emissaries from Teheran. The air bridge between the two "brotherly countries" was actively functioning. Business men, entrepreneurs and representatives of the clergy visited the capital of the Tajik Republic. The so-called "business men" tried to win over public opinion to their side. They often established contacts with representatives of anti-government parties and movements. Another important point was that Iran was the first to open its embassy in the Central Asian region, in Dushanbe. According to witnesses, its Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary associated with representatives of the opposition, employees of the kaziat more often than he did with the employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Tajikistan.

One high-ranking diplomat from Iran surpassed President Nabiev in the number of interviews and appearances on TV and radio.

Did Rahmon Nabiev analyze that delicate situation? Undoubtfully he did. Trying to make advances to the opposition, speaking about the end of Russian hegemony in Tajikistan, he at the same time needed what Moscow was to say. He had no other way out. The former centre sent food-stuffs, fuel, lubricants, and industrial goods to Tajikistan. The frontier with Afghanistan was guarded by Russian soldiers. But then, in spite of their evident support to Islamic "democrats", Russian leaders began to realize, that the events in the traditionally quiet mountainous land could have unpredicted consequences. However, they did nothing. Davlat Hudonazarov's image, his friendly relations with the Russian

press, which interpreted the events in Tajikistan in its own way, played an important role in it. It maintained that the confrontation between democrates and orthodox communists was mounting, and the "new wave" could not put up with the representatives of the obsolete system any longer. Thus, public opinion on the territory of the former Soviet Union about Tajikistan had been formed, and it was not in favour of the legitimately elected bodies of power.

The opposition struck a serious blow from on Nabiev at the beginning of 1992 because of an incident with the Iranian plane. It violated the air space of Tajikistan and its crew asked permission for landing at the Dushanbe airport. They were not allowed to do it. On board of the airliner was the Vice-President of Iran. The opposition press denounced the Tajik President in all possible ways, blamed him for his unwillingness to establish close relations with his brethren-in-faith. But nobody cared to explain to ordinary people that the frontiers of any sovereign state are inviolable, and that there are strict international rules of informing the leaders of a country about a plane which had arrived with such an important person on board. Nabiev kept silent again. He pretended that nothing had happened.

Meanwhile Tajikistan was approaching a dangerous point separating a fragile peace from an imminent war. A few weeks were left before its start. Fundamentalists were looking forward to an appropriate opportunity for throwing the country into a bloody battle.

"QUIET" RALLY WITH THE COLOUR OF BLOOD

On March 26 people began to gather "spontaneously" in the central square of Dushanbe called Shahidon. But this spontaneity was deceitful. Representatives of "Rastokhez", the Democratic Party, the Islamic Party of Rebirth and the "Laali-Badahshon movement arrived there according to a schedule accurately planned by its organizers. The reason for dissatisfaction and extreme activization of self-styled democrats was a live TV broadcast of meeting of the Presidium of the republic's Supreme Soviet.

It discussed anti-government activities of the Minister of Internal Affairs M. Navdjuvanov. The deputies accused him of incompetence, disorganization of law and order

agencies, oppression and dispersal of skilled personnel in the interests of Pamir clans. The meeting was presided over by the Parliament speaker Kenjaev, who supported President Nabiev. The former made a denunciatory speech. The Soviet Presidium passed a no-confidence vote to the Minister of Internal Affairs and demanded his resignation.

The opposition's indignation was understandable. At this difficult time the strengthening of law and order agencies and an efficient performance of their duties could paralyze their actions. But while Navdjuvanov, who supported them, was in office they could easily achieve their goals. The leadership of the kaziat and the Islamic Party of Rebirth decided to come out against the legitimate authority, the more so as the fundamentalists' plans became clear to many people.

Procurator-General of Tajikistan Khuvaydullaev aroused a negative reaction among the people present at that rally. He came out against those, who fanned up tension, and did his best to enforce law and order. It was he who gave sanctions to arrest the Mayor of Dushanbe M. Ikramov, bogged down in bribery, who took an active part in the events back in February, 1990.

Those events were connected with the Armenian refugees from Baku, who were allegedly given the best apartments in the centre of Dushanbe. Many cheated people died in that clash. After that, the main square of Dushanbe was named "Shahidon" which means a square of martyrs.

A few months later, in August 1992. Khuvaydullaev was brutally murdered by Islamic fundamentalists. Before his death, the Procurator-General instituted proceedings against 720 people, who had been involved in murder, violence and robbery.

What were the demands of the people gathered in the Shahidon Square? Resignation of the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet Kenjaev, dissolution of Parliament, release from custody of Dushanbe's Mayor M. Ikramov, higher wages, more benefits for the socially vulnerable sections of the population, lower prises on food-stuffs and orientation of policy toward the Islamic Republic of Iran.

As we can see the demand were heterogenious. Political demands intermingled with social and economic ones, clear to all people. By that time, it was very

difficult to live in Tajikistan. Prices had increased by more than 1170%, the budget was distributed in such a way that expences were 4 times higher than profits.

As for political ambitions, they were aimed at breaking down the state authority and creating power structures similar to those in Iran. It became clear that the opposition, both democrats and fundamentalists,— in spite of some differences in their methods began to joint their efforts and conduct an open struggle for power.

What was the reaction of the republic's leaders like? They promised to consider all the demands thoroughly and to satisfy them, if possible. It meant that the top leaders had chosen the way of cowardly compromise, which, in their opinion, could prevent the further development of confrontation.

A few weeks passed. None of the promices were fulfilled. Rahmon Nabiev pinned hopes on the Decree on Abolishing State and Collective Farms he had signed. In April, the land was to become the property of peasants. It was very important for mountainous Tajikistan, with its limited area of irrigated lands. But the Decree didn't work and the opposition did not hesitate to remind about it. By the end of April, the political barometer clearly spelled out the word "storm".

Did anybody from the top authorities know about it? Surely. And they decided, that the best way to stop all those people was to create another force which would support the legitimate government. That force comprised people from the Leninabad and Kulyab regions. They had no problems with people from Leninabad, because many representatives of that region were in power. But why Rahmon Nabiev put his hope on the people from Kulyab?

Traditionally, it was one of the poorest areas in Tajikistan. The developments had shown that its representatives would obviously take the side of the opposition. Their main desire was to have worthy representatives in the government structures. Contrary to what newspapers wrote, Kulyabians did not support Nabiev personally. They supported the secular way of development. As they were Moslems, they came out for the preserving Islam as their traditional ideology. At the same time, they were against making it the state religion and demanded to prevent the spreading of fundamentalism.

On April, 25 Tajiistan fell into 2 fighting parties. People from southern regions came to the Shahidon Square. Representative of different parties and political movements, described by Russian newspapers as "Islamic democrats", also came there.

But it differed greatly from the rally, which took place in March. People, who came there, were in a critical, mood. They wanted no compromises and had a strong material and ideological support. Tents were put up, fires lit and people were armed. Everybody in Shahidon knew that 30 armoured troop-carriers, bought for the Ministry of Internal Affairs, with complete ammunition sets were in their hands; and the militia and the special task units would not use the arms. Victory would be theirs.

Just the same happened in the Ozodi Square, situated at a stone's throw from Shahidon. In response to the rally in the Shahidon Square, supporters of the constitutional power and the legitimately elected President gathered there.

Very interesting were the claims of the two fighting parties Nabiev's supporters who came to Ozodi in large trucks and buses, carried red banners and streamers reading "Down with Islam", "Long live the CPSU".

In the Shahidon Square some other slogans, like: "Unite with our brethren in Iran", "No Communist leadership", "Tajikistan is for native Tajiks", "Russian troops go home", were streaming in the spring wind.

The situation was heated to a dangerous point. And what about law-and-order enforcement agencies? Obedient to the orders of their chief Navdjuvanov, they kept silent.

It's very interesting to see what the journalists' attitude to those groups in Dushanbe was like. Reporters of the TV company "Ostankino" and a great number of former "central" newspapers were obviously sympathetic with those, who were in the Shahidon square, because they were considered democrats, and the return to communism was impossible. Less attention was paid to the people in the Ozodi Square, because they were regarded as representatives of dying system which tried to use every possibility for its own revival. It is already known today that the people, gathered in the Shahidon Square were paid about 5.000 roubles everyday, plus hot meals and drinks.

But for some reason no one of those, covering that prolonged confrontation were troubled by leaflets spread by the people, who called themselves democrats. These leaflets said, that among the people who came to the square there were national security personnel, the main enemies of democracy. In that square lists of National Security Committee officers were circulated containing their names and addresses. Threats were uttered that for everyone who is died in Shahidon, 17 security officers would be killed.

It's very difficult to argue with facts. Here is one of them. In the beginning of bloody events seventy per cent of members of the Democratic Party were sure, that real democracy could be achieved only through Islam and formation of a state based on the principles of the shariat.

Here are some excerpts from reports by foreign new agencies from Dushanbe dating back to the beginning of May.

Radio Iran said that Iran hailed the fall of Tajikistan's government and it was ready to help the republic in reviving Islamic traditions.

The "Liberty" radio station had its own point of view on the current events. "In the near future, it said, Afghanistan will seriously influence public opinion in Tajikistan. The main reason is political in stability, and under such circumstances, Tajik society will look for a reference point, some standard for comparison in the surrounding world. The latest energetic actions of the Tajik opposition are remarkable for their resolution, which is largerly explained by the victory of their kinsmen in Kabul".

And here is the opinion of the "Deutsche Welle" radio station about the rally in Dushanbe: "It is for the second time that the government of Uzbekistan has appealed with an anxiety to their neighbours in Tajikistan, urging them to realize their responsibility. Perhaps, President Karimov fears lest in his republic too conservative power structures, which have survived since the times when the nomenclature ruled the country, show signs of cracking".

To make the picture complete we will quote a statement of the "Ozodlik" radio station: "...Lately, kinship between Uzbeks and Tajiks has aroused envy in some people, and they are trying to sow seeds of discord in relations between these two brotherly nations, and wait for the fruit of their efforts to ripen.

The instigators failed in their endeavours. They had nothing to contrast with the history of the Uzbek and the Tajik peoples".

Note how different are the interpretations of the disturbing events in the capital of the mountainous republic. But it is not the most important thing. Not a single commentary, report, interview gave an answer to the main and vitally important question: what was the goal of those who gathered in the two squares of the city? General discourse, with references to anxiety in Uzbekistan and other neighbouring countries, only confused many millions of readers and listeners. Ordinary people couldn't understand what was going on at the foothills of the Pamirs? Meanwhile the flywheel of the national tragedy which led to unprecedented butchery, was gathering speed. From the Shahidon and Ozodi the loudspeakers broadcast the excited voices of speakers.

Those from Shahidon showed the greatest zeal, for it was there that the cream of the Tajik nation had gathered: leaders of the parties and movements coming out against the domination of the "communist nomenclature". The striking thing was that as day faded into night, passions in Shahidon were still running high. Nobody can bear so many hours of such emotional tension. The thing was that tired people were substituted with fresh "teams" according to the instructions from experienced "conductors"... And there were enough of them.

Well, who were those that came out into the two main squares of Dushanbe? Let's begin with the Ozodi. People gathered there two months later than their opponents in Shahidon. Their main purpose was not to allow the spread of fundamentalism, and to build a secular state in Tajikistan. Mostly people from Kulyab, Leninabad and Dushanbe came there. Their mottos were mentioned before. It was Sangak Safarov who played a very significant role at that time. He was an extraordinary personality. At the climax of the Tajik tragedy he stood at the head of the volunteer corps of the Popular Front and pronounced the following sacramental phraze: "I've transformed my rage into cruelty!"

Who was this Sangak Safarov whom some people regard as a Tajik Robin Hood, while others considered him a rough and irreconcilable man, ready to achieve his purposes at all costs?

He was 65. He was born in a small village of gold-diggers in the North of the republic. In 1935, during the first wave of the purges, his father was sent to a labour camp. The family was left without the breadwinner. His two elder brothers died of hunger. At the beginningof 1950 Sangak who was the terror of the neighbourhood, was sentenced to his first term in prison for stealing a car. He served his sentence and was set free. But in 1957 he overran a man with the lethal outcome. And again he served his sentence but not long. In 1960 when he worked as a barman in the Central Park of Dushanbe Chechen racketeers tried to kill him, but he was more quick to react, and went to prison again. There his term had repeatedly been prolonged for organizing riots and inflicting heavy bodily injuries. He was free when he was 50, having completed a term of about 23 years in labour camps. After his release, he settled down in Kulyab, and built a small shop where he sold alcoholic drinks.

He was nicknamed "Skipper Sangak" for his sea-style beard, and successfully traded in vodka, wine and beer. His customers said, that he never diluted drinks with water, as his colleagues used to do.

Physically strong, he did not leave the Ozodi Square, ensuring protection and order. After the bloody fighting in the centre of Dushanbe and the defeat of the Kulyab people, he attempted to hide himself from the Islamic fundamentalists at the headquarters of frontier troops. But he failed to do it. On May 7 he was captured together with other Kulyab leaders. For 5 days they had been mocked at and beaten mercilessly, and it was only the categorical declaration of Nabiyev's followers about severe retaliatory measures to be taken saved his life.

Those five days were more dreadful to him than several years in prison. After he had been saved he said this: "Fundamentalists don't understand normal human language. Cruelty must be answered with cruelty".

...As for Shahidon Square, all opponents of the official powers gathered there. Among them were the followers of "Rastohez", "Laali-Badahshon", the Democratic Party, and the Islamic Party of Rebirth. The biographies of their leaders are rather interesting.

The "Rastohez" movement, that united all the intelligentsia under the motto of national awakening and

independence was headed by Tohir Abdujabbar. Rather young, not yet 40 years old he was rather experienced. A Candidate of Economics and a buddng politician, for several years he had worked in Iran and Afghanistan as a representative of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. He had been a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of the Tajik Republic. In the recent period he had worked as a researcher at the Academy of Sciences of the republic. Together with the leaders of the Islamic Party of Rebirth, he played a great role in consolidating the opposition forces and actively spoke at the rally in the Shahidon Square, demanding to form a coalition government, put an end to Russia's hegemony, and widen contacts with Persian-speaking countries. In all his speeches he always tried to prove the exclusiveness of the Tajiks, and historical injustice done to them.

One of the youngest and most obstinate leaders of the opposition is Amirbek Atabekov, Chairman of "Laali-Badahshon" movement. Born in Horog, he graduated from the department of physics and maths at the Tajik Teachers' Training Institute. He taught at a school in the Pamirs, and then returned to the Institute, to the department of maths. He maintained close contacts with the leaders of the Islamic Party of Rebirth. The main aim of his political activity is to give exclusive rights to those who came from Gorny Badahshan. The principal demands of the party are to turn over the highest state posts to those who are from the Pamirs by origin, to improve the socio-economical conditions in that autonomos region and to fraternize with brethren in the Afghan part of Badahshan.

The Chairman of the Islamic Party of Rebirth Muhammadsharif Himmatzoda is always in the centre of events in Tajikistan. This statesman, who has received religious education, has long been one of the main figures in the political life of the Tajik Republic. He is a supporter of a tough course and an ardent follower of the theory of Islamic fundamentalism. Though it is believed that the opposition block was headed by Shodmon Yusuf (Yusupov) in fact it was led by Himmatzoda. He managed to neutralize skilfully all his political opponents, and demanded that struggle be continued till the victory under any conditions, being in no way iferior in slyness and guile to his teacher, Kazikalon.

Forty-three-year old Shodmon Yusuf, the leader of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan, comes from the Gorno-Badahshan autonomous region. He graduated from the Saratov State University and completed a post-graduate course at the Institute of Philosophy and Law under the USSR Academy of Sciences. A Candidate of Philosophy, he taught at the Dushanbe Teachers' Training Institute, and was the secretary of the party organization there. He favours tough policies. When Nabiev had been overthrown, he was eager to enlist employees of the National Security Committee and the Ministry of Internal Affairs as his supporters. He maintained that the Russian-speaking population in Tajikistan should be held as hostages.

...Meanwhile, the events in both square of Dushanbe were rapidly developing. Excitement was been fanned up by the professional speakers, who did not grudge their eloquence for it. In this extreme situation the law enforcement bodies behaved like indifferent onlookers.

It has already been said that Minister Navdjuvanov declared that law-and-order agencies were to remain neutral. At that time he didn't dare support the Shahidon Square openly.

A great number of arms were accumulated in the square. It's common knowledge that on Nabiev's orders 1700 Kalashnikov submachine-guns with ammunition were distributed among Kulyabians in response to the actions by Kazikalon. But their opponents had several times more fire-arms, ammunition, and grenade throwers. In contrast to the Ozodi Square, trained cut-throats were gathered there.

So to prevent bloodshed Nabiev fulfilled one of the main demands of the opposition: he relieved Kenjaev of his post of the Parliament speaker. But there and then, he promoted the latter to the rank of Major General and appointed him President of the National Security Committee.

Even the members of the opposition didn't expect such an obvious political blunder from him. The more — the merrier. In Parliament, a stounch supporter of Kazikalon Davlat Usmon read out an ultimatum to the Supreme Soviet, which consisted of 17 points. In a situation of open pressure and a show of fundamentalist forces, the conservative parliament was broken down. After the bloody incident in the Shahidon Square the

President was completed to make other concessions to the opposition. One third of high ministerial posts including some key ones, were handed over to their representatives. Davlat Usmon got the post of Vice-Premier. The National Security Committee and the Ministry of Internal Affairs were now in the hands of fundamentalists. They also took television and radio under their control, turning them into their mouthpiece.

Just at that time fundamental changes took place in the balance of political forces. The former opposition began to set the tone in the republic. Some time later, in October, Kazikalon Turajonzoda would boastfully speak about it.

A period of total desintegration began in the country. Tajikistan was sliding into an abyss of a civil war.

TRAGEDY OF THE NATION, TRAGEDY OF THE COUNTRY...

A protocol of agreement between President of Tajikistan, the Cabinet of Ministers, the opposition parties and popular movements was signed on May 7, 1992. According to it, the government was to be a coalition and to enjoy broad powers. At the same time it was declared that a cessation the fire, non-use of force and disarmaments of all groups were necessary. R. Nabiev's edict on the voluntary surrender and confiscation of arms from the population of Tajikistan was published on the same day. But nobody was going to fulfil it. On the contrary, having obtained real power, fundamentalists launched energetic activities with the view to strengthening their positions everywhere. Groups of militants began to terrorize civilian population in all parts of the country except the Leninabad region. Mass shootings, arson and pillage were the distinguishing features of militants who burst into towns and villages, white bandages on their heads, reading "Allah Akbar". As they had a lot of fire-arms, and armoured vehicles, they were overran barricades without difficulty and punished everybody who didn't obey them.

Where did they get so many modern arms? Who planned operations aimed at exterminating their brethren? To give the answer to this question we should go back and analyze the situation.

At the end of the 80ies Kazikalon Hodja Turajonzoda (Kahharov) became the head of the Tajik clergy. He was born in a very religious family in the suburbs of Dushanbe. He studied at the Madrasah in Bukhara and the Islamic Institute in Tashkent. Later on he was sent to the faculty of Shariat Amman University to continue his education. Seven years of studies passed quickly. His tutors marked not only the cunning mind and zeal of the future religious figure, but also his talent in masterminding intrigues. He was an expert in that area. Hodja Akbar Turajonzoda knows several foreign languages perfectly. There is an opinion, actively spread by his supporters that no one but him knows the Koran well enough. Though, actually, he often got into difficult situations when interpreting suras the ways it suited him best. Only unbelievable resourcefulness and his ability to deny what he had just said saved him from troubles.

The time when he had taken the post of the Kazikalon was marked by reorganization in the Soviet Union, and Akbar Turajonzoda had vast possibilities for spreading fundamentalist ideas. Kazikalon's ability to link people's interests with the Islamic religion deceived a lot of people at first. His sermons became popular among them. No wonder. The former Soviet social system, which was atheistic, laid restrictions on religion and the traditional norms of people's life connected with it. As a result, feelings of social revenge began to rise and Turajonzoda cleverly took advantage of it. He intensified his activities after becoming a deputy of the republic's Supreme Soviet.

After the February 1990 events he firmly established himself as a political leader. Starting with the winter of 1990 he began to play one of the leading parts in the political life of Tajikistan. Yet, he had to win over the mass media to his side. The Kazikalon has managed to do it without too many difficulties. His artistic manners and considerable financial possibilities attracted a great number of public figures and statesmen of Tajikistan. They wanted to see him as a strong leader, who had serious supporters and protectors in the Islamic word.

It should be stressed that a lot of people disagreed with the activities of the young religious figure.

Makhkamov was fully aware of the danger of the growing political influence of the Kazikalon. And he tried to resist the latter. However, the balance of forces in that period the worsening socio-economic situation played

into the hands of that religious figure, giving him added importance. Believers had great confidence in him.

Crafty, cunning, careful and capable of using any blunder of his opponents with maximum effect for himself, the Kazikalon opened a mosque in Dushanbe, where he gathered young and ambitious religious figures. What did he need it for? The main interpreter of the Shariat realized well enough that it was impossible to attain his aim without having reliable, devoted and like-minded supporters. Tajikistan had quite a lot of specific features; ethnic, religious and socio-economic ones and the Kazikalon understood it very well. That's why the foundation of parties and movements acting in his interests could become a real way towards power and greater political influence.

And that moment came. With direct financial and moral support of the Kazikalon, the Islamic Party of Rebirth in the Republic began to form and play a major role in political life. Turajonzoda became one of the founders of that party. Characteristically, the Kazikalon denied that he had anything to do with the IPR until the last moment. It was only at the end of 1992 that he declared that the Islamic Party of Rebirth was one of the main instrument in his far-reaching plans.

It should be reminded that organization of political party requires a solid material base. The Islamic Party of Rebirth was never short of it. Where did the money come from?

Starting from 1990 humanitarian aid started to come to the republic in large amounts, including Korans, the sacred book for every Moslem. The leaders of the party took hundreds of copies which they sold instead of distributing them among believers free of charge. The same people also sold multiplying facilities coming as humanitarian aid, and used them for propaganda purposes, not to mention major currency injections from abroad. So, by August 1991, the IPR had not only a well-formed structure but also money, which it used for buying arms.

The Kazikalon certainly knew what to spend the money on, although he had always posed as a peacemaker. Suffice it to recall some interviews which he gave to journalists.

"It's too early to speak now about the formation of an Islamic State of the Iranian type in Tajikistan. Our

country is following a secular way of development. And to build a state with an entirely new socio-political system, we need no less than 30 years".

And there is one more confession which he made to journalists on board a plane on the way to Mekka.

By the way, the Kazikalon went on a pilgrimage three times.

"It is not quiet in Tajikistan now. But it's a natural process of the awakening of national self-conciousness of the people, who have been under the oppression of the authoritarian system for decades. The migration process, which is going to intensify, is also natural. This is not surprising, the same is hapenning in the whole world. But there should be no hurry. The fears of the Russian population are ground less. These people have lived here for many years, and there is no sense in running away from the familiar places..."

Cunning, hypocricy and subterfuge were the means which the Kazikalon used for his own purposes. Many people fell for the bait of the "Islamic democrat", but not everybody.

As it has been mentioned, the Kazikalon's influence began to spread in the Southern regions of the republic from the beginning of the 90ies. Naturally, many Leninabad residents fell under the influence of that religious figure too. But most northerners, as well as regional leaders discerned his true goals in time.

In the Kulyab region, one of the poorest regions of the republic, the situation was also complicated. The imam-hotib of the local mosque, a Deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan Haidar Shakirzoda, from the first day of the appointment of the new Kazikalon had taken a negative attitude to him. At the meetings of the Supreme Soviet, leaning on religious people and leaders of the region, he tried not to prevent the influence of that top clergyman on the Kulyab population.

And his persistence bore good fruit. In spite of the difficulties, the imam-hotib succeeded in separating the Kulyab mosque from the kaziat of the republic. It was forbidden to form branches of the Islamic party in the region.

Why did Haidar Shakirzoda took such an irreconcilable attitude to his religious leader?

He was seriously worried with the personal qualities of Turajonzoda: his perfidy, a strong desire for unlimited

power, his desire to attain his aim at any cost, his cynicism and cruelty.

These qualities, in addition to religious isolation and fanaticism of the Kulyab population, could bring about unpredictable consequences in future. Hodja Akbar Turajonzoda didn't forgive disobedience, as subsequent events showed he qualified the people of Kulyab as "unbelievers". Haidar Sharifzoda realized better than anyone else that concentration of political and religious powers in Kazikalon's hands was two dangerous.

But it wasn't so everywhere. In central and southern mosques of the republic the Kazikalon had enough influence. Highlanders, and people in Harma and Dushanbe praised their leader. His intolerance of communists, his desire to create an Islamic in Tajikistan at any cost, and to include it into a new geopolitical union, together with Iran, Afghanistan and Pakistan, as well as a well-arranged propaganda campaign yielded the desired result.

A characteristic article appeared in the newspaper "Charogi ruz" in May 1992 which read: "Everyone in Uzbekistan, from the President and to an unknown poet, through television, radio and newspapers speaks only about the Uzbek religion. They absolutely forget other nations. They are trying to unite all the republics of Central Asia, Kazakhstan, and Azerbaijan, (but not Tajikistan) in an Islamic federation of the Turkish type. This union can be called a "whale", while the lonely Tajikistan is an unprotected "fish" which they will gulp down instantly".

Whence this premise, and why did they begin to disseminate it? The answer is simple enough. Tajiks, qualified as an ancient Indo-European race by R. Masow, a former party functionary, now a specialist on ethnic issues, were falling under the domination of the North, that is Pan-Turkism, which was totally unacceptable to true Tajiks. The Kazikalon knew that in a period of chaos and paralysis of state power, nationalistic feelings always result in a search for a "saviour of the nation", strong, confident and considerate of the people's prosperity.

Who can stand at the head of a newly-independent state? Communists with their smeared reputation? Or Pamirians, proud and seeking high posts? Or poor but striving for more isolation Kulyab and Kurgan-Tyube

people? Most probably not. It may be either the Kazikalon, himself or somebody coming from the North which continued to influence strongly the political developments in Tajikistan. But the latter will have to be Kazikalon's admirer, for he would not tolerate anyone else.

After the Kazikalon "kicked out" Makhkamov from the top of hierarchic ladder there was no other way but to support "Northerner" Nabiev. The situation was not ripe yet to seize power by himself. That was why he resorted to this clever ruse, and the propaganda machine was set to work for Nabiev.

What did they need that trick for? The communist past of the new President, his short-sighted policy, his inability to untangle the tight knot of problems would inevitably resulting his political death. So, the ascent to power of the weak-willed Nabiev was the optimal variant. He at least wasn't dangerous.

Turajonzoda calculated everything with precision. The Democratic Party of Tajikistan, the "Rastohez" and "Laali-Badahshon", movements and the Islamic Party of Rebirth were at the peak of popularity in the republic. And it was quite natural that the top religious figure not only became close to them but was regarded as their unofficial leader. Of course it was hard to live on modest party dues, whie the Kazikalon had everything: power, money, weapons...

Here a logical question arises: where did Islamic fundamentalists receive it all from? There existed several reliable ways of buying and delivering the lethal cargo. Submachine-guns, grenade-throwers, ammunition were either stolen or purchased from the army, frontier troops, and units of National Security Committee and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. It's common knowledge that during the confrontation in May the Commander of the national guards Rakhmanov went over to the side of the organizers of the rally in the Shahidon Square with about 1,500 pieces of fire-arms, and armoured vehicles with complete ammunition sets.

Another sources was a barter of supply the weapon from Afghanistan in exchange for automobile, non-ferrous metals, carpets and money. At the peak of the tragic eents, when fundamentalists were driven out of their positions, they traded "Kalashnikov" submachine-guns for girls on the other side of the frontier, one gun for one

girl. Unimaginable cynism! As for the Kazikalon, it should be pointed out that he didn't consider himself and his worshippers an opposition to the government. During his meeting with the Vice-President of Kirghizstan Feliks Kulov on October 6, he said this: "As of May we have come to power and can no longer be regarded as an opposition. Why doesn't Russia give us weapons, tanks and ammunition? We are observing the agreement on collective security and don't ask Pakistan and Iran for help..." Similar declarations were made by other leaders of the Islamic Party of Rebirth.

Gorny Badahshan had long attracted drug-traffickers by its advantageous geographical situation. The low living standards, shortage of work forced many people to grow and transport the "white death". Part of their work was paid for with fire-arms and "Stinger" rockets. A lot of foreign weapons, were confiscated from the opposition such as Israili-made "Uzi", submachine-guns, American-made M-16 automatic rifles and Chinese-made grenades and grenade-throwers. According to Tajikistan's competent bodies, a considerable amount of these armaments arrived from Iran, under the guise of humanitarian aid.

There is every reason to believe that special services of a number of foreign states played the key role in supplying fundamentalists with modern armaments.

Tajikistan occupies a key position in the geopolitical plans of many countries, which consider the republic an intermediate link in their long-term programme of involving the whole of the Central Asian region into the orbit of their influence. Iranians are specially active. The main principle of their foreign policy is the export of Islamic revolution. It's known for a fact, that the Iranian Embassy in Dushanbe maintained closest relations with the leader of clergy. Such close co-operation is probably based on ethnic and cultural closeness of the Persians and the Tajiks.

Besides that, Tajikistan, according to Iran's far-reaching plans is, on the one hand, a basis for opposing the intensifying Turkish influence, and weakening pro-western feelings. And on the other hand it wants to use Tajikistan in its own interests. Judging by everything, fundamentalists intend to create a kind of a springboard for penetrating into the other Central Asian republic and establishing their domination there.

The desire of the leaders of Afghan mojaheds to play the "Tajik card" in their own political interests is understandable. To G. Hekmatiyar, support likeminded circles in Tajikistan means not only a confirmation of his far-reaching plans to spread Islamic fundamentalism all over the world, but also the weakening of the positions of his sworn enemy R. Dostum in the North of Afghanistan.

In contrast to others, the Afghan mojaheds can do very little. So far, they have only been able to supply arms and instructors.

Those are strategic plans of the tutors of Tajik fundamentalists. As for their tactics, they are mostly based on financial and military assistance. Let us turn to facts. New mosques were built in different parts of Tajikistan in 1991—1992. As a rule, that was done on foreign money. They were converted into arms depots, where militants met and worked out their plans of operations and destruction of cities and villages opposing to the regime. Iranian and Afghan instructors rendered considerable assistance to Islamic fundamentalists. It's known for a fact that they trained fighters not only in the camps on the territory of Afghanistan, but also acted energetically inside Tajikistan, specifically, 40 kilometres away from Dushanbe, in the Varzob and Romit mountain gorges where training centres were established. There, foreign instructors trained young people in the most brutal methods of killing.

What was the use in skinning innocent people alive, scalping them and pouring lead into their mouths and eyes? They drove people into bath-houses and sheds, though there were not only fundamentalist's opponents, but children, old men and women among them not interested in policy.

Practically no one left them alive. The main aim of the fighters was to make to sow terror and to subordinate people to their will. Only the true Tajiks could stay alive. The Kazikalons one said: "It does not matter that half of the Tajiks will die in a sacred war. But with the help of the rest I'll build a true Islamic State!"

Isn't this the main reason of the Tajik tragedy? The answer to this question was given by the organizer of the bloody terror, himself — Kazikalon Akbar Turajonzoda, 39-year-old spiritual leader and a devout "Islamic democrat!"

Meanwhile, the war was flaring up in Tajikistan. Well-armed mobile detachments perpetrated crimes killing on ancient soil, thousands of their compatriots.

The paralysis of state power and inability of the militia to counter act the fighters untied their hands. They began to kill everybody: Tajiks, Russians, Uzbeks and Tatars... What for? In the name of the "outstanding" ideas of Islamic fundamentalists?

What is it like? What ideological foundation does it rest on?

It is an extremely reactionary and fanatical movement, aimed at seizing power in Islamic countries and building states according to the laws of the Shariat. One of the leaders of Islamic fundamentalism Said Kutba executed in Syria for an attempt at a coup d'etat revealed the ideology of Islamic fundamentalism most clearly.

He declared that it was impossible to build a just social state structure without violence.

Bloodshed was the only way to creating a truly Islamic state.

Islamic fundamentalism was exported to Libya, Iraq, and Saudi Arabia. More strongly its ideas took root in Tajikistan and in a number of towns in the Ferghana Valley of Uzbekistan, after a session of the Islamic Conference Organization attended and addressed by representatives of Tajikistan. Judging by everything, it was then that they received assurances from its leaders of their latter's support to their brethren fighting, against the communist government.

The influence of fundamentalism increased when pilgrims began to visit Mekka more often, about 1989. In that period they began to help the Tajik clergy, on a major scale, they supplied the clergy not only with book, but also with millions of dollars. Part of this money was spent on the construction of mosques, but most of it was spent on buying armaments in Afghanistan and Pakistan and on paying professional instructors.

Apparently, the main interpreter of the Shariat didn't forget about himself either. According to some evidence, a considerable sum has accumulated on his bank account abroad, enough to provide him a comfortable life.

It is said that on the eve of the bloody fighting in Tajikistan he sent his family and relatives abroad, meaning to use the remaining population for building a state of his own.

As for financing the fighters, a lot of money was sent to them from the Kaziat-Bank, functioning in Dushanbe. It's naive to think that this money was made up of the believers' voluntary donations. There is evidence that the opposition disdained no means in squeezing out money out of ordinary people. One of the most effective ways was the threat not to perform the rite of "janaza" (the burial service), a terrible offence for any true Moslem. Later on when fundamentalists came close to being defeated, they demanded that each family to give them one fighter, or pay 40 thousand roubles.

The most blood-letting events occurred in the Kurgan-Tyube region. In the settlement of Urgut alone 1000 people were slaughtered within hours. Thousands of people act of 70 thousand inhabitants died in the regional centre. Up to now nobody can state the exact number of those fortured to death. After the town was recaptured there were only 5 thousand people left there. Journalists called it "the town of the dead", and that was no exaggeration.

Why did Islamic fundamentalists direct all their malice and hatred against Kurgan-Tyube?

The People's Front headed by Sangak Safarov rose to defend it. Casualties on both sides were enormous. An interesting document got into the hand of Kurgan-Tyube's liberators. It was a diary of the Regional Executive Committee's Chairman Kadriddin Aslonov, a staunch supporter of fundamentalists. He was shot on S. Safarov's order. What was there in that diary? It contained a list of paramount tasks, namely; the setting up of head-quarters, formation of military structures, with names of company and battalion commanders, announcement of the total mobilization, appointment of the leaders of the Administration of Internal Affairs and the regional National Security Committee as well as of the military commissioner of the region.

Supporter of the Islamic fundamentalists K. Aslonov was enforced the turning over of all military hardware by the units of the 201st Russian motorized infantry division to the opposition leaders. The diary contained the names of those who could head the regiment, its head-quarters, reconnaissance, medical service and the propaganda department. The document was written in Russian and based on the structure of the former Soviet Army.

The top-priority tasks were to destroy the TV tower, restore communication with Dushanbe, distribute armoured vehicles, grenade-throwers and, machine-guns, and supply the region with food-stuffs and flour.

The diary also contained a detailed list of how many armoured troop carriers, submachine-guns, light and heavy machine-guns, grenade-throwers, sharpshooter rifles, grenades and cartridges were stored on each collective and state farm. Outposts with the exact number of fighters and commanders were assigned to each particular location. For instance, protection of the Kizil-Kala bridge was entrusted to the detachment of M. Erbanov, consisting of 30 persons. They were to be armed with 10 "Kalashnikov" submachine-guns, 2 machine-guns, 2 grenade-throwers and hand grenades. In case of emergency, a tank, an amoured carrier or a combat infantry vehicle could be sent here.

The former chief of the Kurgan-Tyube Regional Executive Committee attached special importance to secrecy. It will be very interesting to have a loot at his list of codes names:

— Piyoz (onion)— Ahayi Rakhimchon,
— Kartoshta (potato)— Bakhriddin,
— Sholgoi (turnip)— Mullo Shakhmarasul,
— Choyi Kabud (gree tea)— submachine-gun,
— Choyi do (tea)— light machine-gun,
— Choyi hindi (Indian tea)— cannon from the armoured carrier,
— Fatir (Flat cake)— grenade-thrower,
— Guspand (sheep)— armoured carrier,
— Kushakor (ram)— combat infantry vehicle,
— Buka (ox)— tank,
— Madagov (cow)— ballistic missile,
— Peach — machine-gun,
— Shaftolu (peach)— machine-gun,
— Zardolu (apricot)— grenade,
— Olucha (cherry)— pistol.

Certain numbers and codes were given to all the districts and farms in the region. The last pages of K. Aslonov's diary were devoted to the structure of leadership of the Kurgan-Tyube region. "Chairman — Kadriddin Aslonov" stood out in bold handwriting.

Paradoxically, all that chaos and destruction of the state structure were the doing of a certain part of the intelligentsia, as well as Soviet officials, Party functionaries and clergymen. Strange as it may seem, but the oppsion groups who had fought against each other not long ago, were united by double-dyed nationalism, and the idea of building a great state of Tajiks", where they would play the leading roles. And to achieve their goal, they stopped at nothing. Playing the role of human rights champions fundamentalists ordered that all "unbelievers" be killed, and among that number they listed everyone who had any doubts whatsoever. Who were these people, who hid themselves in the plundered flats of Kurgan-Tyube with sharpshooter rifles and took aim at Russian soldiers who carried away decomposing bodies of tortured to death moslems? Were they Moslems themselves?

Meanwhile the blood of victims of the civil war was staining the land of Tajikistan. Fundamentalists trained by Iranian and Pakistani instructors and Afghan mojahedes needed reinforcement.

Their tactics in replenishing their detachments was simple. From villages they took young men, who had served in the Soviet Army. For any insubordination — a bullet in the head. But there was something still more terrible, when they raped women and children in front of those who dared disobey them, and when mothers and fathers were burnt alive. To do such things, Islamic fundamentalists enlisted the services of most disgraceful renegades.

Here is one example. Militants released criminals from a reformatory in the settlement of Rokhati near Dushanbe. Forty staff members of the reformatory were most brutally killed. Murderers and violators reinforced the ranks of militants. Frankly speaking they didn't care about the great ideas of creating a state of Tajiks. The possibility of going quick profit practicing unpunished violence encouraged them to perpetrate unheard — of crimes.

Professional politics busied themselves with a different kind of thing — assassination of those political figures of the republic who came out against fundamentalists. Most refined methods of killing were employed. On the Kazikalon's instructions, his hirelings in the Parliament "pulled through" a resolution on dismissing the guards who protected a number of high-ranking leaders. And what is most astonishing is that the Parliament unanimously voted for it. What was it necessary for? To

liquidate the disagreeble ones with the least possible effort, which they did immediately.

They brutally killed the Procurator-General of Tajikistan Khuvaidullaev, and tortured to death the Deputy Chairman of the Kulyab Regional Executive Committee Sangov and Abdurakhimov, who openly opposed Islamists. Only some months later the mutilated corps of a deputy of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan, head of the republic's customs administration Alimov was found in a gutter.

But it wasn't only politicians and enemies of fundamentalists whom they killed brutally, with refined sadism. Karamatullo Kurbanov, a popular and talented Tajik singer and composer suffered the same fate. He was captured by bandits, when he was going to a concert with his ensemble. Neither the fame of the singer nor the great love of people could save him and his seven musicians. They say, that he had a presentiment of the death. His last concert was recorded on October 10, 1992 at a TV studio in Tashkent. He did not sing any joyful song then. Ten days later he was killed. Karamatullo used to sing about his Tajikistan, its majestic mountains and love...

Newsmen were allowed to enter Tajikistan, especially the Russian ones. It's true — is it not?— that it described fundamentalists as "opposers of the communist regime" and "Islamic democrats". However, even that press had finally sobered up, and started to call the "opposition" an "Islamo-democratic alliance". Who else if not that alliance is to blame, for the human blood! In the Vahsh Valley alone more than ten mutilated corpses were found, every morning. The situation was the same everywhere, except in the Leninabad region.

How did President Nabiyev behave in that situation? He was completely broken down and demoralized. In the opinion of many people, Nabiyev was behaved in such a way because of his personal cowardice. It is said that back during the great confrontation of the two squares one of the "democratic" leaders said that in case the authorities resorted to force he would meet the same fate as Chaushesku, the President of Romania. And he made his choice... The civil war and the blood of innocent people betray irresponsibility of leaders, weakness of the state structures and paralysis of the ruling top.

Hundreds of thousands refugees appeared in Tajikistan. The Russian-speaking population did their best to leave for Russia, selling dirt-cheap their houses, flats, and furniture. Tajiks and Uzbeks, as well as the representatives of other nationalities rushed to Uzbekistan's border. Most of them settled with their relatives in the Ferghana Valley and the Surhandarya, Tashkent and Kashkadarya regions. Here is evidence of the people who experienced that tragedy.

Tovashar Pardaev, an inhabitant of the Kirov state farm in the Vahsh region: "In the middle of June Kazikalon's bandits bursted into our village. They searched every house, stole money, jewels and all valuable things. And what could I give them? The wife and twelve children? The bandits began to fire at our houses. We ran out of the house and moved to the border of Uzbekistan through the unharvested fields, without any bread or money. Thanks to Allah, we are alive. But most people died. I don't know, if my house still stands there. Most likely no. Fundamentalists leave nothing after them".

Ibohon Akbarova, an inhabitant of the "Sarvin" collective farm in the Bakhtar district of the Kurgan-Tyube region:

"The war reached us at the beginning of the September. First, Islamists began to fire at our village from submachine-guns and cannons, then to search the houses, taking all the young men and girls with them. No one has seen most of them ever since. Bandits set fire to the corn field and grain-prossessing plant. I even had no time to take some clothes for children or milk my cow. The last thing I saw was smoke and fire. We reached our relatives in Uzbekistan through Kulyab.

It's good that people help us and feed us. But the food sticks in the throat and besides we are ashamed to wear other people's clothes. In Kulyab my two sons went to fight against Islamists as members of a National Front detachment. I don't know whether they are alive or not... My heart is bleeding for them!

Nurmahhamad Ahmedov, a resident of Kurgan-Tyube: "Tanks and armoured troop carries appeared in our street. There was firing. It was clear to us that they fired at random. In the twilight I gathered all members of my family and took them out of town. It was easy for me because I know all paths. For ten days we were hiding.

Then we tried to steal to Gulistan. I have a daughter. She lived in Dushanbe but now her house is ruined and I don't know where she is..."

Hamroli Ahmadaliev, a villager from the Kurgan-Tyube region: "This spring I was transferred to the reserve after doing military service in Germany. I came back home when this war began. Every day I saw a lot of disfigured bodies of women and children in our river. We took them out and buried them. Fundamentalists had set posts everywhere. They were armed very well. They had submachine-gungs, machine-guns and grenade-throwers. They were well-supplied with petrol for their cars. When they came to our village they burst into houses crying: "Did you vote for Nabiev? You can now see the results. You are to die". They knew exactly who was a Tajik from Harma and who — from Ferghana. They had complete information about people. Once they came into my house and told me that if I wanted to be alive I should join their detachment. But I didn't want to kill people. At dawn my family and I left the village".

And this is a heart-rending detailed story of a six-day ordeal of a young man who left Uzbekistan for Dushanbe to find out at least anything about his relatives.

"I had finally reached the border. Captain Abdiev woefully shook his head and said: "I doubt if I should allow you to go there. You may catch a bullet. But if you need it urgently... Good luck to you". It is hard to believe that war is going on in Tajikistan. The November sky is clear, and here are no signs of war. I reached the Regar railway station by car and was stopped by a group of people with red fillets around their heads. "Go back", said the oldest man, and cursed, "or you don't treasure your own life? "I left the car, and it turned back. I heard strange sounds, as if somebody was chopping wood. I was explained later that those were the sounds of firing. In the waiting-room I met two men, Zhamolitdin and his son Akbar. They also wanted to help their relatives in Dushanbe and to take them to a safe place.

A worker of the railway station told me that since October 24 there had been fighting between "yurchiks" (supporters of the government) and "vovchiks" or "vahkabits" (the opposition). Three days ago the "yurchiks"

demanded that the "vovchiks" surrender, but it was useless. I saw numerous advertisements on lamp-posts reading: "A house for sale", or "A private apartment for sale", or "Looking for a fellow-traveller to go to Severouralsk"...

Once I heard the following conversation: "We have no choice: either we fight or pay 40 thousand. I don't believe this democracy which shed the blood of tens of thousands of human lives. It is not true that the dead don't talk. The time will come when they will".

Skirmish is going on. Fighting has begun near the station. I can hear submachine-guns grumbling howitzers barking and machine-guns whining. The god of war has mounted his prancing horse. Groups of people with red fillets are running to where fighting is going on. Sometimes cars arrive without the licence-plates. A group of people in mourning are talking quietly. The autumn wind picks up dry leares from the ground.

The station superintendent Jabbar-aka rang up Dushanbe. He learnt that the situation in the capital was calm. A group of servicement has left city to repair the railway. But opposition is trying to prevent them from getting here. We are looking desperately into the sky. No prospects for salvation. A bullet whistled over my head, tearing down yellow vine leaves.

Some hours later five Russians also going to Dushanbe joined us, but soon they disappeared.

When the skirmish died down we saw tens of ruined houses. We were told that the password was "dead-lock", and this helped us twice.

Here is an excerpt from an overheard conversation over a portable radio transmitter: "This is Zair. The situation is very strained. Yesterday we lost 12 soldiers, 40 people are wounded. Muhammad Rahim missing. Enemy lost 100 soldiers and 210 were wounded. Their inspirer, mullah Alam ran away. Now their head is the chief of the motor depot Sharif.

It was cold in the waiting-room, and I was asked to light the stove. So I brought some coal from a train. Some more people joined us: six Russian-speaking men, a gipsy with a wife and two children. A Russian woman came in later on.

The setting sun was the colour of blood. We all felt pangs of hunger.

At night we were awaikened by some people who wanted to check our papers. The fighting had resumed. No information about any trains. Only cocks, indiffrent to the war, are crowing. The gipsy man turned out to have no passport, gipsies never carry identification cards with them. The man with a submachine-gun shouted: "I'll shoot you dead!" The gipsy women and the children started crying. We were rooted to the floor, but the man with the submachine-gun checked himself. The gipsy was taken to the head-quarters.

The dark waiting-room was packed with people. As I was washing my hands in an irrigation ditch, I dropped my passport. It took me half an hour to dry it near the stone. Everybody repeated the same words: "war", "hostages", "position", "trench", "reconnaissance". The skirmish subsided. We heard that government supporters lost one soldier Sodyk Rahim, a cook. The sounds of submachine-gun again. Another life lost. We went outside and saw the bullet-ridden wall of the railway station. Somebody circulated an appeal of the National Front to the population. It accused anti-government forces. According to the appeal, tens of thousands of people were killed in the war, and the number of refugees amounts to 430 thousand.

Fifty two corpses were loaded onto a tractor. Its driver Bakhodir went mad. There is no possibility either to phone or send a telegramme from the station. The railway is not repaired yet. We are looking for food but all shops are closed. At last we managed to get 2 tins of canned fish. Zhamolitdin-aka got hold of a loaf of bread somewhere, and we ate it all.

We saw a fellow who was pulling a hand cart with a dead taxist Juma by name. We were told that Juma had 4 children. Little by little the town is returning to life. Shops have opened and people can buy rolls, macaroni and juices. Vodka is on sale at two shops. In one of the houses we asked to make some tea. I think refugees have bothered the local inhabitants enough but the latter have patience, because they know that tomorrow they may find themselves in our position.

We have left the station and reached the head-quarters in the "Shirkent" hotel. A lieutenant-colonel gave us three submachine-gunners and a bus and wished us good luck. In a while we have arrived in Batost. There, at a control our documents were checked again.

Taken from a radio broadcast: "The rate of cotton-harvesting in Tajikistan has dropped against last year. We have picked 550.000 tons less, causing a loss of 3 billion roubles to the republic..." The bus took us a far as Shohombor village. We had to walk. Empty cartridges under out feet. Dushanbe is 12 km away. Some time later we were picked by the driver of "ZIL-130" truck. The city is under the martial law. Curfew. On that day there was heavy fighting in the Tajik capital on October 24. Shots can be heard even now. Shops are open, but there is no bread. However, there is meat on sale. We joined the long bread-line, but no bread was left when our turn came. The shop-assistant sold us part of the loaf he had left for himself.

At last I met my relatives and saw for myself that they were alive. I gave them some sugar, oil, and warm clothes. It was impossible to return to Tashkent. There were no planes and no trains, and it was very dangerous to travel by bus or car. Still, I made up my mind to leave. Refugees kept coming to Dushanbe wave after wave. A young Tajik warned me: "Brother, dont go there — you'll be killed". An hour later I got to the village of Chorakkaron. Eight men with red fillets levelled the submachine-guns at me, wishing to check my passport. There was a combat infantry vehicle near the soldiers. They turned out to be talkative. They gave me some bread, persimmons and raisins. I climbed into the cabin of a "Kamaz" truck. There were three corpses in it. One of the dead men was from Shakhrinav, the other two — from Pakhtaabad. All of them were killed in yesterday's battle. The truck stopped at a check-point. The soldiers bid farewell to their dead comrades-in-arms. Two hundred of them vowed vengeance. We arrived at Pakhtaabad. The "Kamaz" went away. I remained on the highway, and started walking. Soon a "Zhiguly" car picked me up and I reached the frontier. Thank Allah, a horrible six-day nightmare was over. But the clouds of the fratricidal war were still in the sky over Tajikistan. The civil war was going on..."

There are a lot of such frank confessions and tragic documents left since 1992. They will remain as terrible, but necessary evidence for history and for our descendants.

Every day the slaughter was taking a heavier toll of human lives. Did fundamentalists or the leaders of the republic have enough reason to make any attempts to stop it? Representatives of all the opposing groupings gathered in Khorog at the proposal of Davlat Khudonazarov to conclude a treaty on peace and to find the ways of preventing the nation's destruction. It seemed that the document signed in the centre of the Gorno-Badahshan Autonomous Region would stop antagonism and hostility. But the events went too far. The cruelty of one side evoked that of its opponents. The thirst for revenge became predominant over reason.

The ruling clique set great hopes on holding a World Forum of Tajiks. According to the intention of its organizers it was meant to stop the fighting for some time. The "Pravda" newspaper gave the following account of that event.

"On August 31, when the events were centred around the capture of the Presidential Palace and the hostages in Dushanbe, ministers and representatives of some organizations met in the large hall of the Presidential Palace on the decision of the government to discuss preparations for the World Forum of Tajiks. Right after the meeting the Palace was surrounded by soldiers and only a few men managed to break through. Some passers-by were surprised to see the ministers and other high-ranking officials jumping from the high fence of the Presidential Palace. One needn't be as wise as Solomon to understand that the trap had been planned beforehand very thoroughly.

There have never been any "third" force. These words disguised the same agents: the Islamic Party of Rebirth, the kaziat and the Democratic Party. Two Deputy Prime-Ministers were captured in their offices where the Vice-Chairman of the Kulyab Regional Executive Committee Sangov was at the moment. In a few hours he was savagely tortured and killed. For three days and nights officials of the Cabinet of Ministers and the President's staff were retained by the armed men in one of the palace halls. At night some of them were taken to the basement where they were interrogated under torture. The first Deputy Prime Minister D. Karimov was ordered to stand against the wall three times, and kept at gunpoint in one of the mosques for a whole night. They scoffed at 60-year-old L. Kayumov who had

just been appointed Tajikistan's Ambassador at the UNO. The drugged and drunk young militants forced the hostages who were at the Presidential Palace, to report to them what they had done for Tajikistan, and at night they poured cold water on the hostages' heads to prevent them from falling asleep.

The statement by Shodmon Yusuf to the point that the Democratic Party bears no reaction to those events was the height of cynicism. Yusuf knew that it was one of his deputies who supervised the actions of the armed men in the mosque of the settlement Yuzhny situated near the Dushanbe meat-packing plant, where the hostages were tortured. It was he who walked up and down with the submachine-gun and threatened to shoot down everybody.

In my opinion there is no Democratic Party in Tajikistan now.

This name is used as a guise for illegal actions which have been made a law. There is a group of militants, specially trained task force fighters calling themselves "Head-quarters for the Salvation of Fatherland". It was formed by Shodmon Yusuf in summer. It was from those very head-quarters that the group set off to capture Rahmon Nabiev, it was from those very headquarters that shortly after the murder of the Procurator-General of Tajikistan Nurillo Khuvaidolloev there came the information that the assignment had been fulfilled.

By early September it had become obvious that the Government headed by Rahmon Nabiev and the President himself were political corpses, who had lost control of the situation. But a drowning man catches at a straw. And Nabiev was no exception to the rule.

He proposed that the next emergency session of the Supreme Soviet be held in Hujand. But the deputies were not unanimous on this question. Quite a few of them insisted on holding the session in Dushanbe. But Nabiev was against it. Akbarsho Iskandarov, the new Parliament speaker was also strongly in favour of Hujand, he had agreed upon this point with the President and was prepared to fly to the North of the country together with him.

The disgraced President was the first to arrive at the airport. Heavily guarded, he sat in the deputies' lounge. But soon the airport territory was swarming with armed people who declared that they were representatives

of the "young people of Dushanbe". Where could they obtain information of the President's departure? The time of the plane's take off was kept secret. Now we can only make guesses at it. It is obvious that the fighter group members had access to the most confidential information both through certain people's deputies and through high-ranking officials, adherents of the ideology of fundamentalism.

In short, on September 7 shots were fired in the Dushanbe airport, badly injuring three body-guards. It was suggested that the President, who was very scared, sign the statement on his resignation. After some reflection, Rahmon Nabiev, together with the representatives of "the young people of Dushanbe" retired into the room for VIPs. The short negotiations resulted in a statement of the President's resignation addressed to the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan. It should be noted, that R. Nabiev put forward one important condition: the opposition was to guarantee him and his family complete safety. The ex-President was given such guarantees. The deal was struck...

In accordance with the Constitution of Tajikistan, all power passed into the hands of Speaker Akbarsho Iskandarov, one of the high-ranking functionaries, who comes from Gorny-Badahshan Autonomous Region. He is known to have once enjoyed the support of the Kazikalon and the leaders of the Islamic Party of Rebirth and the Democratic Party. No wonder, the leaders of the Laali-Badahshan Movement also placed high stakes on him.

The resignation statement had already been signed when troops of the 201st Russian motorized infantry division entered the airport area. But it was too late. As Major-General Muhitdin Ashurov, the division commander, told journalists later on, troops were brought in at the request of the National Security Committee and R. Nabiev himself to avoid the slaughter.

The stationing of Russian troops on the territory of Tajikistan had aroused undisguised rage and hatred of the opposition parties and the kaziat all through the period of political confrontation. Playing on the basest feelings of the people, they constantly emphasized that genuine independence could be reached only after the foreign troops were withdrawn from the territory of their sovereign state.

Those populist mottoes had appealed to people and they had been quite efficient until the massacre began. And even in that state of emergency, the propaganda machine of the opposition achieved a lot. The 201st division had remained neutral during the conflict period. Though there is some information that part of the weapons got into the hands of "yurchiks", detachments of the Popular Front headed by Sangak Safarov.

Russian troops in Tajikistan found themself in an extremely complicated position. The officers had to guard the warehouses and the territory, the division was stationed on day and night. They were subject to shooting from submachine-guns and sharpshooter rifles, and shelling... There were victims among the enlisted men. But... the double-faced stand of the Russian leadership and its Foreign Ministry couldn't but affect the officers as well. Those people couldn't understand for whom they had to fight and whom they had to defend. At first, the Russian division had been actually left to the mercy of fate.

Servicemen need consideration too. They were not indifferent to the fate of their families. They could have been sent to the Motherland, Russia, but only some could really go there. Most of them had neither flats, nor any social guaranties there. So some officers brought their wives to the posts with them.

But although some local people were hostile to the Russian division, hundreds of people found refuge on the territory where it was stationed. Escaping bloodshed inhabitants of cities and villages set on fire came to the servicemen. They received temporary refuge and scanty food. Soldiers and officers of the motorized infantry division had a tough time. Regiments and battalions were not complete with personnel. There weren't enough drivers of tanks, combat infantry vehicles and armoured carriers. Did fundamentalists know about it?— Of course! Therefore they were conducting preparatory work among the population to find specialists who had command of this military profession. Oppositionists were sure: that Russian people wouldn't be able to stand it and would flee Tajikistan leaving all the military hardware behind. Such demands were heard very often. There were provocations every day. For example, someone often rang up the headquarters of the motorized infantry regiment, which was stationed in the suburbs of Kurgan-Tyube, and said: "Your armoured carriers have shot several

families today. Everybody has already heard about it. We shall revenge on you".

Under fire, Russian soldiers and officers collected decomposed bodies from the streets of towns and villages. No one but them could do it. 40-year-old Major General Muhritdin Ashurov, commander of the division, especially infuriated fundamentalists. They had accused him of different wrongdoings and called him all kinds of names! But he remained loyal to his oath and his military duty.

Were in no better, if not worse, conditions the frontier — quards, who were protecting the Tajik-Afghan frontier. The notion that the frontier is under lock no longer exited. Scanty frontier units and posts, and lack of experienced commanders made the long border with a complex relief "transparent". Every day many people came and went across it. Most of them were armed. There was repeated exchange of fire killing young men in green caps. They wondered who were they protecting the frontier from, and where their real enemies were, if they were shot in the back?" This is not an exaggeration. Fighter groups, leaving for Afghanistan under cover of night often seized by storming mountain passes and trails controlled by frontier-guards. A lot of trespassers were detained and turned over to competent bodies for identification. But when the same people tried to cross the frontier again some days later, the servicemen felt helpless.

Inhabitants of mountain villages were ill-disposed to frontier-guards. Propagandists of the Islamic Party of Rebirth and the Democratic Party convinced the people that it was Russian servicemen who didn't allow the high-landers to meet with their relatives in the Afghan Badahshan and that most of their troubles were caused by Russian "invaders". That same was said in mosques too. And people believed it, without realizing into what abyss they were being pushed by Islamic fundamentalists. Taking that into account, the Supreme Soviet of Byelarus adopted a resolution on withdrawing seven hundred of its cilizens who were serving on the Tajik-Afghan frontier. Some time before Ukraine had adopted a similar resolution. By hook and by crook, Islamic fundamentalists had attained much of what they were seeking. The frontier was no longer protected the way it had been several years before. Stolen things, money, cars and girls poured out into Afghanistan in exchange for arms.

It's clear that those who crossed the frontier were not ordinary people. Supplied with the letters of recommendation and passwords, and informed about meeting places with mojaheds' emissaries they crossed the turbulent Pyanje, and took almost impassable trails to fulfil important assignments of Islamic fundamentalists.

A certain Ibraghim Babayev was detained in an attempt to cross the frontier from Afghanistan into Tajikistan. He was carrying two letters written on standard form bearing the letter-head NIFA —"Sayid Ali Front".

One letter said: "My dear brother mojahed Mullo Hamidullo. We, muslems of Afghanistan, pray to Allah that the holy war be won and Islam and the Shariat reinstated.

Exterminate unbelievers, communist heretics and their henchmen. In this struggle your brothers are ready to execute your every assignment. Don't send us money, nobody takes it. It would be better if you sent some gold. Work will go on better. We have sent you two "Kalashnikovs", shells for a hand anti-tank grenade-thrower, some hand grenades and one our brother mojahed with Ibraghimjan.

Sincerely yours, brother Sayid Malehy Sayid Akram".

"My brother mullo Hamidullo. The total price of the two "Kalashnikovs", the shells for the hand anti-tank grenade thrower and some hand grenades will be 300 thousand afghani. The sum you have sent with Ibraghim was 195 thousand afghani. Sayid Saleh".

Here is another an interesting document. It was written on a form of the grand mosque. Gozy Malik in the Ilyichevsk district of the Kurgan-Tyube region and was to be delivered to "brethren-in-faith".

"In the name of Allah, the beneficent and Merciful! How do you do, dear Ustod, I am Nurullo and I'd like to inform you that 47 people were sent to you on September 6, and today, on September 10 22 more are ready to go. But it is getting increasingly hard to gather young men. It is all the fault of some of our leaders. We will do all our best. The number you asked is hard to achieve.

In conclusion, I'd like to inform you that there are a lot of our guyes in Kunduz province. Mobilize them, please.

Kindly yours, Nurullo and Yakub".

These letters are about sending young men from Kurgan-Tyube sympathize with fundamentalists to the training centres of mojaheds. Judjing by everything, it was rather hard for Islamists to recruit young men.

Most of them preferred to pay large sums of money not to be sent for training to Afghanistan. The grand mosque was the centre of all organization activities. It was a risky affair to bring arms from Afghanistan. In spite of the "transparency" of the frontier, fundamentalists were exposed to danger constantly. One could run into frontier-guards, die in skirmish, drown in the turbulent Pyanje, clash with an opposing mojahed grouping on the other side of the river, who had one- solution to all problems — a burst of machine-gun fire — and one is gathered to one's forefathers.

So, opposition leaders resorted to the service of unexperienced young people as often as possible. They intimidated some of them, others, or bribed them, put them under the command of "honest elder brothers" and sent to "the sacred cause" with their blessings. Here is what three Tajiks who had been to the other side of the river say. Naturally, we are using their assumed names.

"Last year I had no job", says 20-year-old Ibraghim from the Guissar district. At the beginning of October 1992 Fathullo, a friend of mine, who was a member of the Islamic Party of Rebirth suggested that I should go to Afghanistan and help "the fighters for freedom and independence" deliver the arms.

He spoke convincingly, and I agreed. There were 22 of us. We drove in a lorry up to Kalai-Humba in the Gorno-Badahshan Autonomous Region. We passed Kafornikon, Obugarm and Komsomolabad, and get to our destination without any difficulty. In the appointed place we waited for those who would take us accross the frontier. At midnight we approached the Pyanje and were ferried over the river without any difficulty. At the Darvaz district we were met by an Afghan who had to take our group to one of the military units of the mojaheds. We had walked for 8 days until we reached Fayzabad in the Badahshan region where Basirhan's units were stationed. Our leader was taken to him. But it turned out that the latter had not even heard anything about us. The hadn't seen the letters of recommendation and the representative of the IPR who had to deliver them.

We could not go back. That was why the head of our group decided to make our way to kazi Kabir in the province of Takhar. But he wasn't there when we got to that place. We were received by his assistant. He listened to us attentively and asked us about the situation in Tajikistan. In the end he gave us arms and told to return home immediately.

By the same route, we got to the Pyanje River and came to Dushanbe without any losses. There, our weapons were taken from us and we were allowed to go home after a thorough check up. We were told that we would be informed if needed. Frankly speaking, they gave us very little money.

"Only flour was left at home when I was approached by Fathulla, a member of the Islamic party",— says eighteen-year-old Shomakhmad.—"Are you hard up?— he asked and promised me a great sum of money if I went to bring arms from Afghanistan. He spoke of it as of a fascinating journey. He said there wasn't any risk, frontier guards never left the territory of their outpost. I had no way out and I agreed. Half-starved we walked to Fayzabad for ten days. The leader had a letter to kazi Kabir. We weren't kept for long there. They gave us some food to eat and we went back carrying heavy weapons.

We passed the border at night. Our hands were aching from the heavy submachine-guns and cartridges. It was only on our own territory that we took a short rest. We made our way by trails to Kalai-Humba. There, we halted. The chief called me and took away the arms I had been carrying and said: "Get out, you, pup. You're too young to fight for the sacred cause!"

Without any money I walked and hitch-hiked to Dushanbe. On my way there, I was stopped by some "vovchiks" who asked me who I was and where I was going. I told them the whole story, and they beat me up brutally. "At parting, they said: "Be grateful to Allah that you are still alive".

"From Afghanistan we came loaded with weapons. I was lucky. In the camp they treated me heartily I don't know why they had taking such a liking to me" said Nurullo from the Pyanje district.— They fed me, tapped me on the shoulders and declared with conviction: "Be patient, soon we'll live in one country, as soon as we

banish all the communists and their people from your land".

Honestly speaking I returned home very happy, and felt as if I were a hero. The crossing of the Pyanje was very difficult. The frontier-guards constantly combed the shore. With the help of guides I somehow crossed over. They gave me some money, a trifling amount, as compared with the current prices.

At home I learnt some terrible news. Islamic fundamentalists had killed my brothers Mirali and Egamberdi. The latter went to visit my relatives. All of them were locked in a bath-house, tortured all night and shot in the morning. I cursed everything, and first of all myself for I becoming their henchman. This will be a heavy burden in my heart as long as I am alive".

We can quote a lot of such confessions. No doubt there are other opinions, those of true fanatics, ready to die for "the sacred idea of fundamentalism". These young minds people must have been cunningly deceived and poisoned with hatred to those whom they called "unbelievers".

War always brings death. But wars are different. Each of them has its own terrible and unique aspects. The confrontation between people of the same nation took a most awful form in Tajikistan.

This is proved by the facts supplied by eye-witnesses. Here are some of them: Islamic militants set up their head-quarters in the bath-house on the territory of the "Turkmenistan" farm, Bakhtar district, where they tortured peaceful residents. They threw the murdered people into the Vahsh River, having disfigured their bodies".

"On September 28, 1992, in the Shaartuz district Islamic militants slaughtered all the people who voiced their disagreement with the actions of fundamentalists".

On October 29 practically all the population of Garauty was slaughtered. During their raid Islamic fundamentalists acted especially cruelly. They raped young girls, put off their eyes and cut off their breasts. They skinned people alive.

How could Tajiks kill Tajiks so brutally? Many people tried to find the answer. And they all came to one conclusion. To act in this way, one must have passed through appropriate training course. Unluckily for Tajiks, hundreds of militants had completed such a course in Afghanistan. Mojaheds took part in these barbarous raids

together with Tajiks. There are a lot of examples and here is one.

A man was killed in the Kolkhozabad district where fundamentalists showed extreme violence. His name is Djaloliddin, Sayid Hashemy's son, aged 22 and born in the Kunduz province, Akcha district. The identification card found in his pocket said that he was a member of the Islamic Party of Afghanistan. He was recommended for admission by Abdul Rahat, son of Abdul Gafar, and by Neymatullo Muhamat Han. He had been a member of this party since 1991, and was sent to Tajikistan as an instructor, who tought militants how to kill people. And there were many such instructors in the armed groups of Islamists. Experts give different numbers: from 300 to 500 Afghan mojaheds took part in the massacre of innocent people in Tajikistan every day.

There are some attempts by the mass media to describe the supporters of the "Islamic Democratic Alliance" as a force which had appeared spontaneously, in response to the conservative post-Communist government. What is the aim of such publications, which form public opinion?

Either they are mistaken themselves or they are under somebody's pressure, but they desinform millions of people. It is an established fact that the opposition, represented by the kaziat, the Democratic Party and the Islamic Party of Rebirth, was ready to fight a long time ago. To say that it happened just accidentally is to say nothing. Here is one of many examples, the "Appeal to the people of Tajikistan", which opposition drew up after lossing Kurgan-Tyube.

"All the head-quarters of the opposition, with the aim of giving an armed rebuff to our enemies, must prepare the necessary conditions for the best armed groups to launch an offensive all over Tajikistan and especially in Dushanbe.

All the armed units supporting the opposition, must fight their way through to the Kurgan-Tyube and Kulyab regions, and especially to Dushanbe. In case of any resistance by resort to force and continue your passage those districts.

Arrange everything for declaring a state of emergency in Dushanbe. Use any means to this end, including terrorist acts.

Declare all the differenty-minded people and opponents of the opposition residing in Dushanbe, hostages. Namely:

— Russian-speaking people,

— those who came from the Kulyab and Leninabad regions,

— all others who do not support the opposition.

To carry out this plan, the opposition has all the means.

Supporters of the opposition will have all kinds of assistance, both military and humanitarian.

As for the armed units, the law does not forbid to use weapons to protect one's interests and to express freely his political convictions.

We ask non-interference from the military organs and government bodies. The situation all over the republic is under the control of the opposition.

Fundamentalists knew that without a brazen propaganda based on intimidation, they would never attain their aim. In September, for instance, they celebrated the "Day of Islam". Cars drove along the streets, and agitators shouted into loud-speakers:

"The cause of the chaos in Tajikistan is the absence of Islam and the stay in power of the pro-Communist partocrats who have been over thrown everywhere else!"

"All Power to Islam!", "Down with Nabiev", "Death to the unfaithful!", "Communists and pioneers, burn your pioneer ties and your Party Cards in Public!"

At the same time there leaflets were circulated among the moslems, urging them to store the arms for the building of a new Islamic society in Tajikistan.

To them were attached lists of legal power supporters, which contained detailed information on their occupations, families and the places of their residence.

All those people were declared unfaithful and subject to liquidation.

The tragedy of any civil war lies in the fact that cruelty breeds cruelty. Thousands and thousands of people who stay far from political ambitions, are involved in these tragic events. Here is the one of the most terrible examples. The number of Tajiks killed during the civil war exceeds the number of those who perished during the Great Patriotic War. However, to shed the blood of their compatriots wasn't enough for Islam democrats". They spread their nets far from the borders of Tajikistan. It's quite obvious that fundamentalists were

secretly backed in some regions of Uzbekistan, for example in Namangan and Surkhandarya. By the insistence of the clergy, money was raised there to be sent to the "defenders of Islam". These sums amounted to millions of roubles.

Fighters from Uzbekistan joined detachments of fundamentalists. A few of them were arrested. These were the young men who coudn't fully understand the aim they fought for on the side of the fanatics. The members of the notorious organization "Birlik" (Unity) frankly gave their support to the Islamic Democratic Alliance. They made speeches in the Shahidon Square on behalf of all the Uzbeks, shouting that the Tajik brothers who were following the path of genuine democracy set a worthy example to all who are still living in sovereign countries with communist governments.

It's clear, that "Birlik" hoped to receive political dividends from the civil war in Tajikistan. It wanted to involve numerous Uzbeks living in Tajikistan, in the conflict. But the "Birlik" leaders faided to notice one important thing: thousands of Uzbeks were killed by fanatics in that mountainous land. The "northern brothers" influenced the events in Tajikistan, by disseminating "Birlik"'s programmes, and drawing people who sympathized with them, into their ranks. In the town of Tursunzade the "guards" of the Popular Front arrested Abdulmumin Turaev, who had different materials connected with "Birlik"'s activity and clean forms of "Birlik"'s member cards.

In the tragic events in Tajikistan, the most ardent fighter against fundamentalism was Sangak Safarov. He headed the Popular Front and its armed forces. When writing about him most authors point out his criminal past.

It's true that Sangak Safarov acted on the principle "blood for blood!" It's known for sure that the personally shot four Islamists taken prisoner after their crimes had been proved. Strict discipline reigned in his units. Looting and raping were punished by shooting on the spot. The attitude to Safarov is dual both in Tajikistan and abroad. In his interview to "Pravda" the leader of popular Front declared that black students from Dushanbe colleges fought on the side of fundamentalists.

— Black students?— he was asked,—from what country?

— From Africa.

But don't laugh at this uneducated old man, who learned his geography in labour camps. First, try to clean at least your own block from the filth, to say nothing of a whole country.

As we know there is no smoke without fire. According to some information, recently, a black man from the Dushanbe University was executed in a canyon near Dushanbe. For big money he had joined a fundamentalist formation. They say, that he was particularly cruel with women. It was women who captured him, though he was fighting back, and hanged the raper.

For Safarov's head fundamentalists were ready to give a reward of many millions of roubles. He revenged on them with particular cruelty. After the bloody slaughter in Kurgan-Tyube, he swore to liquidate personally the Kasikalon and his nearest assistants personally. And Sangak didn't give up to the end.

He is accused of unbridled fury to his enemies and his units are believed to receive secret help from the 201st Russian motorized infantry battalion. However, its command treated the Kulyabian leader with caution, may be due to his criminal past. As for cruelty, Safarov had a lot of convincing arguments. He has a habit of answering with another question: "On the "Turkmenistan" collective farm in the Vahsh region, Islamists had set up a slaughter-house in the purification installations. One day 160 innocent people were brought here. They were brutally fortured and killed. How should we treat those Islamists? They are not human they are wild animals".

After liberating towns or villages Sangak Safarov used to gather people for a meeting and deliver a speech. He especially liked to address the Russian-speaking population. He often, said: "If Islamists kill Russians, I will skin them alive". Both the Russian-speaking population and most Tajik people regarded him as a saviour, a people's protector.

However, Nabiev was very suspicious about Sangak. But seeing that the man had real authority, he gave orders that "Kalashnikov" submachine-guns be distributed among his men. After their defeat in the Shahidon Square he started acting more independently and firmly, for behind him he had real power, and authority over many people. But he was not a politician. His work was set everything in order and to avenge on rapers and killers.

He understood it and spoke about it more than once. When this book was being prepared for publication, a tragic news came that Sangak Safarov had been killed. However bitter it might be, but a lot of analysts had predicted this. The Tajik "Robin Hood", the defender of the unfortunate died from the hands of Islamic fundamentalists. Most people say that it was just a tragic coincidence, some kind of a quarrel among friends. No, that is not so. Lately Sangak Safarov had been engaged in peacemaking activity. He carried out talks with the opposition on the Afghan refugees and their return to their homeland. He was implacable in many ways. Sangak dreamt of a peaceful future for his country. But the life of that man was stopped short by a burst from a "Kalashnikov" submachine-gun.

Well, fundamentalists had squared their accounts with Safarov. They took away the life of that protector of the common people. But acting like that they showed their weakness and cowardice, because we know that Sangak always faced his enemies in an honest fight.

He was buried like a national hero. Sangak Safarov's life was a short but vivid page in the history of Tajikistan.

The first refugees, mostly Russian-speaking, appeared in Tajikistan after the events in February 1990, when Islamic fundamentalists made their test attack. The pretext for a rally and disturbances were the Armenian refugees from Baku. At the same time, slogans against the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Tajikistan K. Makhkamov were put forward. But at that the opposition was driven into a corner and hot feelings subsided.

But some perspicacious people understood that there would be no more tranquility in sunny and peace-loving Tajikistan. Three hundred thousands Russian people live there before the beginning of events in Shahidon and Ozody Squares. They were highly qualified specialists, working in the sphere of material production. They started leaving the republic when the first shots were fired and the first blood shed. It was just what fundamentalists wanted. After the well-known statement made by the Shodmon Yusuf in a TV broadcast to the effect that Russian people should be held hostages, the opposition took concrete actions. Some Russian women captured in local buses were brought by force to the

head-quarters of the 201st division. The demand was: that armoured vehicles be given in exchange for their lives. General Ashurov shares remarkable self-control. He refused to meet their demands. And he stated that if they didn't set free the hostages, the division would take immediate action. The threat had its effect.

Then there came another attack from the opposition: fundamentalists burst into a school and took schoolchildren and teachers of Dushanbe school No 8 as hostages. They were set free after prolonged negotiations.

In the course of armed clashes in Kurgan-Tyube and other towns of Tajikistan there perished many representatives of the Russian-speaking population. Practically all houses and flats of non-indigenous population were plundered. What goals did Islamists achieve by blackmail and provocations? Seeing the passive attitude of the Russian leadership to this question and the uncertain position of the 201st division, they demanded military hardware. But so far as plundering was concerned it was all done out of purely material interests. Lorries filled with furniture, carpets, and everyday utensils continuously moved in the direction of the Afghan border. All those things that by people had accumulated for decades by hard work were transported to mojaheds in exchange for weapons. It was not only flats that were plundered. Out of 64 Dushanbe's ambulances, 54, including expensive resuscitation ambulances with foreign-made diagnosing equipment, disappeared. The rest were broken.

This all gave the right to the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan, then acting President Akbarsho Iskandarov to say bitterly: "A new term "the Tajik version" has appeared in the vocabulary of modern politics which means primitive brutality and political wildness". But neither he nor the members of the coalition government had the heart to take decisive measures. The self-styled masters of the republic, fundamentalists, carried on their bloody acts.

...And people kept fleeing their homes. No matter where — anywhere. For over a month and a half, Russians lived in stove-heated goods vans without normal food, guarding their belongings half of which had been stolen, waiting for the railway to start working. Tens of thousands of Uzbeks and Tajiks moved across the fields to the border of Uzbekistan and to the quiet Leninabad Region. Many of them went to Afghanistan.

Refugees are an inevitable part of any civil war. How many of them were in Tajikistan? There are different figures — from 680 to 800 thousand. Hundreds of thousands of human tragedies. Everybody understood that urgent and cardinal measures were required, or else the fire, flaring in Tajikistan and its "bloody syndrome" could turn into a regional tragedy which would involve tens of millions of people. A terrible lesson of Tajikistan must not be repeated.

THE CHRONICLE OF THE TAJIK TRAGEDY

The tragedy of hundreds of thousands of people. Physical and moral wounds. It will takes decades to cure them all. Historians, sociologists, pcychologists and writers are expected to study everything that caused a terrible and merciless civil war in Tajikistan.

But it is not good to leave everything "for later on". In order to rightly understand what is going on and to give an honest answer to many questions, one must have truthful and first-hand information without any comments.

Information came from the flaring Tajikistan from many sources: from journalists, foreign observers, employees of home affairs' bodies and servicemen. Laconic and telegraph-style information reflects very precisely the situation which took shape in the mountainous land. Below are given some data starting from early June 1992. Most of them are set in the chronological order and are of great interest.

...After Tajikistan had declared its independence, Iran was the first to propose establishing direct bilateral relations. In doing so, it pursued political goals, wishing to use islamic fundamentalists for expanding its influence in Tajikistan, spreading pro-iranian sentiments, and imposing the idea of a teochratic state. It is not accidental that the first embassy in Central Asia was opened in Dushanbe by the Islamic Republic of Iran.

On the initiative of Teheran, representative of Iran, Tajikistan and Afghan mojaheds adopted a resolution on founding a joint body which would promote cultural relations and propagandize the cultural legacy of the three related countries.

...Theological studts were to be sent to Iran, and specialists in the Arabic and Persian languages — to Tajikistan. Among other things, in the autumn of 1992

fifty students from Tajikistan were to begin their education at different departments of the Teheran University.

...Those who went to Afghanistan from Tajikistan were mainly young people. They were trained with the aim of returning to Tajikistan for carrying out terrorist act. For instance, the leader of some armed groups Latif (IPA) regulary sent Tajik citizens to a training centre near the port of Sherhan. Copy-books and brochures on combat training confiscated from one of the groups of border violators, speak of the activity of that centre.

...An increasing number of armed IPA groups appeared in the populated area of Pyanje on the territory of Afghanistan. There is evidence showing that high-ranking officials of the Afghan opposition visit Tajikistan regulary.

...Most violators of the Tajik-Afghan border are representatives of the Islamic Party of Rebirth who cross the border with the aim of getting armaments for equipping their militants.

...Leader of the Kulyab militants Sangak Safarov declared that his groups would not lay down arms until the coalition government retired.

...According to some observers, groups of Afghan mojaheds loyal to Gulbeddin Hekmatiyar, deliver armaments to the groups of the Islamic Party of Rebirth in Tajikistan. Mojaheds also train Tajik groups in methods of guerilla warfare and urge them to declare "jihad"— a holy war in Tajikistan.

...A fire broke out at a substation in the populated area of Zafarabad. The transformer where about 20 tons of oil was used for cooling caught fire. As a result, a number of areas remained without electricity, about 20 km of cables was damaged. Representatives of the government don't exclude a possibility that the fire was a result of a subversive act...

...The most acute problem is the problem of refugees, most part of whom are non-indigenous inhabitants of Tajikistan. As a result of certain measures taken by Uzbek authorities, aimed at minimizing the stream of refugees into the Republic of Uzbekistan, a great number of them gathered in the borderline areas: in Kurgan-Tyube and other regions of Tajikistan. Part of refugees from the Vahsh Valley moved to the Kulyab region. The number of refugees in the Dangary and the Sovetsky districts exceeds several thousand.

...An unknown group terrorizes the non-indigenous population in the Kolkhozabad area.

...On the territory of Iran are formed centres for training subversive groups which will be sent to the former Central Asian Republics for intelligence and subversive purposes. The main aim of such groups will be to collect intelligence data and evaluate the situation in Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, as well as to control the distribution of armaments...

...The US Embassy was evacuated from Dushanbe. The evacuation was carried out with the help of the Russian servicemen. American diplomats expressed their gratitude to the crew of the military-transport plane through their Russian colleagues.

...The head of the spiritual board of the Kulyab region Hoji Haidar Sharifzoda spoke over the radio, calling upon the people of Tajikistan to lay down arms. He turned down the accusations of his involvement in stirring up the conflict.

...In one of special camps for training militants on the territory of the Badahshan province which is under the control of the Islamic Society of Afghanistan, two groups of Tajik militants of 15 persons each, are being trained for sending to Tajikistan. Some sources testify that such camps will be formed in Pakistan.

...In the Kunduz province was formed a centre for training militants. The centre carries out training in the rules and methods of guerilla warfare according to a shortened three-week programme, and in subversive activity — according to a two-month programme. An active part in training new "mojaheds" is taken by Pakistanian specialists.

...According to the Ministry of Internal Affairs of Tajikistan the crime has increased by 40.6 perent against the same period last year. Most alarming is the situation on the territory of the Kulyab and the Kurgan-Tyube regions where the number of the grave crimes has increased 50-fold.

...The latest data prove that in the province of Kunduz advisers from Saudi Arabia, who use deserters from Tajikistan, carry out intelligence and counter intelligence activities in Tajikistan and supposedly, in Uzbekistan.

...In Vahsh, Komsomolabad and some other villages of the Pyanje and the Guissar district, Kurgan-Tyube region, centres for training Islamic terrorists were set

up. Instructors from among of Afghan mojaheds were noticed in some of them.

...In the Kulyab region, missionaries of the IPA (Islamic Party of Afghanistan) selected volunteers to be sent to Afghanistan where they will be trained in armed detachments of G. Hekmatiyar.

...There is information that high officials of the Afghan opposition visit Tajikistan regularly. It is supposed that G. Hekmatiyar's ally field commander Abdul Latif, provides assistance in smuggling weapons to terrorists in Tajikistan. He also keeps under control some northern regions of Afghanistan. It is highly probable that some citizens of Afghanistan can go into the territory of the Republic of Uzbekistan with the aim of carrying out various missions entrusted to them both by the commanders of armed groups of Afghan mojaheds and special services of Iran and Pakistan.

...A. Latif, commander of the armed formations of the IPA, sent his people (2—3 men) to collect intelligence data and estimate the situation in the borderline regions of Tajikistan and to control the distribution of the weapons delivered from Afghanistan.

...One of the leaders of Kulyab terrorists Anvar Hasanov has come out from under the control of his opposition group and begun to put forward demands of government resignation, threatening that they will not lay down arms.

...The Chairman of the Islamic Party of Rebirth Muhammadsharif Himmatzoda intends to visit the USA in the nearest future with the aim of explaining the socio-political situation in Tajikistan and asking for support and help in establishing the power of Islamic fundamentalists in the republic.

...Up to the present the delivery of weapon from Afghanistan has continued uninhibited. Frontier troops are not able to carry out their duties of guarding the state frontier because the troops have filled only 40% of all vacancies.

...The Chairman of the Democratic Party of Tajikistan Shodmon Yusuf, demanding the withdrawal of "foreign" armies from the republic, has declared that he doesn't agree with the initialled Treaty on the Status of the Russian Army in Tajikistan during the transitional period. In his opinion, the republic has everything necessary for the formation of its own army.

...Frequent requests of the local population to armed detachments and frontier troops located on the territory of Tajikistan to give them weapons and armaments, are alarming.

...An armed conflict between fundamentalists and their opponents took place in the Kulyab region. As a result, one man was killed.

...Beginning from August, 38 trespassers were captured on the Afghan-Tajik border. 12 submachine-guns, 6 light machine-guns, 5 guns and 2 pistols were confiscated. Two armed clashes were registered on the borderline. As a result one trespasser was killed and two wounded.

...The fratricidal war caused the death of 300 more people, and 335 are reported missing. Among those killed were 11 soldiers-internationalists and 12 servicemen of the Tajik Ministry of Internal Affairs.

...The "Greens" as they call various islamic groups, here looted the local office soldiers-internationalists in Kurgan-Tyube, stole the archives and the list of the latter living in the town. Mercenaries fighting together with the "Greens" are hunting for them, killing them brutally.

...Near the town Vahsh, a training base of the allies of the IPR has been registered. It can train 250—300 people.

...The situation in Kurgan-Tyube remains tense. Clashes on ethnic grounds and capture of hostages are still frequent.

...The clash between Vahhabists and Kulyabists took place in the Bahtar district of the region. Twenty two vahhabists and 3 representatives of the Kulyab community were killed.

...The real leader of the Islamic Party of Rebirth, Kazikalon Hoja Akbar Turajonzoda declared that they would continue political struggle till the victory even if the Islamic opposition had to go underground.

...The leader of the IPR Himmatzoda ordered that the party members intensify their efforts to fetch weapons from Afghanistan using the Kumsanghir "corridor".

...About 70 per cent of all the weapons in the republic are in the hands of the IPR allies.

...The leadership of the Kulyab region stated that the detachments of national guards set up on the decision of the regional committee would not hand out a single

gun till they got reliable guarantees that the opposite side would also do the same.

...The leader of the IPA G. Hekmatiyar ordered his field commanders, operating in the provinces of Kunduz and Badahshan, that they help to Tajik terrorists both with arms and ammunition. More than 300 Tajik citizens are being trained in A. Latif's troops. They are supporters of the IPR.

...Clashes with the use of fire-arms between opposing groups on the territory of the Kuibyshev state-farm in the Bahtar district, Kurgan-Tyube region, became more fierce. Thus, a group of people attacked a self-defence group of local residents in the centre of the collective-farm. As a result, the head of the self-defence group was killed and two of his fighters were badly wounded.

...Serious assistance to frontier troops in guarding the border is rendered by one of the leaders of the resistance movement of Kulyab Sangak Safarov who sends his people to joint duty details and maintains good relations with the command of the frontier troop.

...On the night of September, 4, localities in Kurgan-Tyube inhabited by Uzbeks from Samarkand, was attacked. The houses of a hundred people were burnt down.

...As a result of the fighting in Kurgan-Tyube, the Urgut district was completely destroyed. The number of those killed is 1000. The town is abondoned by more than 30 thousand refugees. There is information about mercenaries coming to Kurgan-Tyube from the Baltic region and the Caucasus. They are on the fundamentalists' side.

...The report that 2 bases to train Tajik terrorists not far from Kunduz, has been confirmed. There are also facts proving that Iranian weapons are delivered to Tajikistan across the Tajik-Afghan frontier.

...Kulyab terrorists captured the Nurek Hydro-Power Station and the town of Nurek. During the operation, 9 people were killed and 8 — wounded.

An agreement on non-visa trips of the people with diplomatic and service passports has been signed between Iran and Tajikistan.

...The leader of the IPA G. Hekmatiyar made it clear that the Afghan province of Kunduz is looked upon as the spring-board for interfering in the internal affairs of the Republic of Tajikistan. Tajik terrorists began to penetrate into the IRA through the province of Herat,

using the check point of Turagundi on the Turkmen-Afghan border not far from Kushka.

...The attempt to penetrate into the territory of Tajikistan made by an armed group on the Kumsangir stretsh of the frontier was stopped. An armed group of 50 people supported them from the territory of Afghanistan. During the operation, 15 people were surrounded and taken prisoners. Among them there were 8 citizens of the Islamic Republic of Afghanistan. Several machine-guns, grenade-throwers and ammunition were confiscated.

...The building of the Tajik government was seized by militants under the leadership of the Chairman of the Democratic Party Shodmon Yusuf. As hostages are held a Presidential adviser Sharipov, business manager of the Council of Ministers Mirzoyev, and Deputy Prime-Ministers Karimov and Gafarov.

...Opposition armed groups seized the government building. The militiamen who guarded the building didn't offer any resistance. On the same day over the local radio spoke opposition representatives who demanded resignation of the President and formation of a State Council. The mass media are controlled by the IPR.

...A two-hour programme about Tajikistan is broadcast everyday over the Iranian television. It always begins with showing Ayatolla Khomeini before a storming crowd of people. Then they get down to the events in Tajikistan. The events are interpreted from frankly fundamentalistic positions.

...In the town of Kurgan-Tyube, opposite the building of the regional Soviet, a mass rally of the local population was fired at. The people gathered to demonstrate their supports to the legally elected President. Radio Kulyab broadcast the appeal of the leaders of the region to the residents in which they called upon the latter to come out in defence of the legally elected authorities of Tajikistan and declare a war on the opposition.

...A total number of armed groups of the IPR in the area of Dushanbe came to about 2000. Their headquarters is situated in the building of the kaziat (religious board). Their main base is the territory of the former children's recreation camp "Varzob" in the northern part of the capital.

...In the district of Karatol (40 km north-west of Dushanbe) training centres of Islamic militants were founded on the basis of the former civil defence regiment

as well as in the Romitam ravine. Instructors from Iran and Afghanistan take part in their training.

...In the Kurgan-Tyube region armed groups of fundamentalists are ready to seize arms and ammunition belonging to Russia's 201st motorized-infantry division. A forcible concentration of peaceful residents in the area of Kizilkala is noticed. They are to be used as the shield in the seizure of store-houses situated there. A column of military hardware of the division was twice fired at in Kurgan-Tyube. Sharpshooters fire at the military settlement more often now.

...Representatives of the kaziat circulated and appeal to the republic's population which urges families to send one man to their armed groups or pay a ransom of 40 thousand roubles.

...In the course of his visit to Gorny Badahshan the Kazikalon succeeded in drawing many residents of the Pamirs into the fighting groups of fundamentalists and broadening the channels for the inflow of weapons from Afghanistan.

...There are facts of forcible expulsion from Dushanbe of people who come from Kulyab region, looting their property and physical outrage.

...Units of leading forces who came from Kazakhstan, Russia, Kirghizstan, and Uzbekistan fortified the most vulnerable sections of the Tajik-Afghan border. Attempts to cross it are being made regularly. It presents a threat not only to Tajikistan but to the contiguous states. A stream of weapons can start flowing into the territories of all newly-independent states. There is evidence that 3 centres for training militants were founded is Afghanistan. This is fraught with dangerous consequences.

...Leaders of the Islamic Party of Rebirth hold the opposite stand. They consider it necessary to open borders with Iran and close the one with Uzbekistan.

...Nowadays the main reason of mass unrest on national grounds has nothing to do with the conventional border-line between the republics. It depends on the socio-economic level of this or that area and on its social system and legal protection provided to its residents.

...Lately a number of political parties of Tajikistan, first of all the IPR, fearing lest the influence of western countries grow stronger in the republic, came out openly against the expansion of contacts with the USA, Turkey

and Russia. They call for a closer cooperation of Tajiks with their kinsmen in Iran and Afghanistan.

...Because of the blocades of railways, refugees from Kurgan-Tyube cannot go beyond the territory of the region. Non-Tajik population is subject to discrimination.

...As a result of blocking by the opposition of the Chormagzak pass the delivery of essentials to the Kulyab region was suspended.

...There is considerable destruction in Kurgan-Tyube as a result of the use by the opposing parties of artillery and grenade throwers. The town lacks food products and medicines. The leaders of the Regional Internal Affairs Administration turned over to Islamists three armoured carriers with complete sets of ammunition. Now armed groups of militants possess seven armoured carriers, combat infantry vehicles and two guns.

...Chairman of the Kurgan-Tyube Executive Committee Kadriddin Aslonov demanded a complete withdrawal of Russian units from the region. He blamed them for the escalation of military action and said at a news-conference that illigal groups receive weapon from Russians.

...Another transport aircraft arrived in Dushanbe from Iran with humanitarian aid as well as armaments and ammunition for the opposition.

It is reported that the sky of Tajikistan was violated by two Afghan helicopters. Both helicopters crossed the border in the Pyanje area. They were loaded with weapons and ammunition for the groups of "Islamists". After unloadling, the helicopters returned to Iran.

...A. Iskandarov pointed out that the law-enforcement agencies of Tajikistan turned out to be incapable to oppose well-organized forces of "kulyabians" who were better equipped.

...Mercinaries from Afghanistan fight on the side of vahhabists from Kurgan-Tyube (about 400 people), instructors from Pakistan work for them too.

...Commander of the 201st motorized infantry division, Major-General Ashurov declared that his division would remain where it was stationed and would not be withdrawn from Tajikistan. It will carry out assignments in accordance with the agreement signed in Tashkent.

...Atrocities on the part of fundamentalists towards Uzbeks residing in southern areas of Tajikistan cause retaliation. An armed group of local Uzbeks led by

Begmat was formed in the Pyanje district with the aim of protection from militants.

...A stream of refugees from southern districts of Tajikistan to Leninabad regions increased. According to the latest data their number amounted 10 thousand.

...In Kurgan-Tyube out of 70 thousand residents there remained 5 thousand. About 25 thousand refugees from Kurgan-Tyube are now concentrated in the Kabadien and Shaartuz districts which border on Uzbekistan. Many of them are starving, there are the cases of infectious deseases.

...There is evidence that religious leader Turajonzoda declared "jihad" against the faithless, by which he meant "Kulyabians", Russians and Uzbeks.

...In the area of Kizilkola a group of "kulyabians" managed to seize the bridge across the Vahsh River along which the opposition receives assistance. An armed group of "Kulyabians" destroyed an column of 4 trucks which delivered equipment and reinforcement from Dushanbe to the Islamites in Kurgan-Tyube.

...Over a hundred cases of typhoid were registered in Kulyab and other residential areas.

...An acute shortage of food products made itself felt in Kurgan-Tyube, Gorny-Badahshan and Kulyab where a daily norm of bread per person is 100 grammes. The situation is deteriorated by an epidemic of typhoid.

...A religious leader Turajonzoda intensified his activity aimed at frustrating the offensive of anti-fundamentalist forces in the republic. The religious board allocated 50 million dollars to its armed groups for the purchase of armaments. The money was received from special services of Saudi Arabia during the latest visit of the religious leader there. Besides he gave orders to shoot down seven field commanders who took part in negotiations in Hujand.

Cases of physical violence by fundamentalists against Europeans occur more often. There are facts of kidnapping of service men's children who were then taken to Afghanistan. Islamists offer bribes to the commanders of military units for allowing them to use heavy arms against the enemies' armoured vehicles.

...The opposition is trying to involve Russian troops in the internecine war. The capture of servicemen pursues namely this object. Thus they've captured 12 servicemen who were sent to Kofarnihon region. A bus of the

Russian frontier troops' administration was shot at. A lieutenant-colonel and a woman warrant-officer were wounded.

...At the entrance to three houses in Ispechak residential neighbourhood several dozen corpses were founded. In the leaflets thrown around there were threats that the same would await anyone, no matter age and sex, who would fight against Islamists.

...In the north-western boundary of Orjonikidzebad were founded the corpses of three Russian servicemen captured ealier. According to some reports they were tortured and then shot.

...The Tajik opposition leaders intensified their activities. Thus, at the end of December Kazikalon Turajonzoda visited Dushanbe twice with the purpose of setting to his groups the task of intensifying terrorist activity against the leader of republic on his order about 200 militants left for Dushanbe, who pass themselves for the Popular Front members.

...Experts of a UN special committee who visited Tajikistan in October pointed out that one of the trends in escalating the conflict is the attempt of extremists-minded political leaders to play the "Uzbek card" in their struggle for power, and with this end in view, to transform the conflict between Tajik clans into an inter-ethnic one between Tajiks and Uzbeks.

...The 201st Russian division units wedging themselves between opposition groups, stopped the escalation of the conflict. They prevented massacre in Dushanbe by blocking entry of militants into the city and took all major objects under their protection.

...According to inhabitants' demand, the Kurgan-Tyube and the Kulyab regions were united into the Khatlon region. The blockade of the railway is going on by the supporters of Safaraly Kenjaev who comes from Harma.

...The leaders of Islamic fundamentalists are trying to get support and assistance of foreign Islamic states and leaders of extremist Muslem organizations. Thus, in the course of his private visit to Egypt the IPR Chairman M. Kimmatzoda was busy establishing contacts with representatives of religious circles. In the course of his meeting he repeatedly stated that there were all the necessary conditions for creating an Islamic State in Tajikistan.

ONLY STRONG POWER CAN STOP MADNESS

In the spring of 1992, on the eve of the tragic confrontation in Shahidon and Ozodi squares, the US Secretary of State James Baker was in Dushanbe. He was paying visits to sovereign Central Asian states. In the course of his talks with Rakhmon Nabiev, the high-ranking American diplomat asked the Tajik leader to follow the pro-Iranian course in exchange for help from the US. The details of that private talk are not known. But both sides were satisfied with its outcome.

It was clear that to follow the pro-Iranian course amounted to political suicide for Nabiev. The opposing parties and movements demanded that a truly Islamic state be built and that Tajikistan join a new geopolitical space which includes Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan. But deep in his heart, the former Tajik leader hoped that by means of compromise and concessions he would maintain peace in the republic. Though everything indicated the opposite. He knew well that emissaries of fundamentalist organizations had acted in Tajikistan for some years already, studying the public opinion, and nationalism was increasing. It's known for sure that the head of Hekmatiyar's intelligence and security service, a specialist in subversive activity Bashir had been to Tajikistan several times. He did not come as a tourist. By April the ground for a major social outburst had been prepared in the republic.

The neighbouring republics — Kirghizstan, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan — knew about it and were worried.

But the upper echelon of power in Tajikistan pretended that they did not notice those signs.

Rahmon Nabiev paied official visits to friendly states, and generously distributed high posts among close and loyal to him people. But finally thunder crashed out and it couldn't be otherwise.

The developments that ensued are well known: crueltly of fundamentalists, death and sorrow of innocent people. Bearing that in mind it is extremely interesting to analyse the position taken by the leaders of the sovereign republics.

Russia with its lessening influence in Tajikistan and its own internal problems was not in the mood for preoccupying itself with events in the South of the former empire. In the beginning, the mass media gave such

contradicting information that most people in the Russian Federation were convinced that "Islamic democrats" were fighting against communism. It meant that the last stronghold of the communist system was about to collapse, and it served it right. As for the badly guarded frontier with Afghanistan, it was too far from Russia. It had enough from the long war across the river. Of course they felt sympathetic with many thousands of Russians who lived there, but in Russia itself life wasn't sugar either. It seemed that at first Kazakhstan was not serious about the Tajik tragedy either. Well, it does not have a common border with that republic, and there was no serious danger of the conflict spreading onto the Kazakh territory.

However Kirghizstan was more anxious. Eternal arguments over the use of water and pastures, a rather numerous Kirghiz diaspora in that country, where the situation was no longer peaceful and a sufficiently long common border with the neighbour were enough to cause a splitting headache among the Bishkek leaders.

Uzbekistan also found itself in a very compl cated position. A broken, unguarded common border hundreds of kilometres long, more than one million three thousand Uzbeks with Tajik citizenship and attempts of fundamentalists to find supporters in some of its region could involve the largest Central Asian republic into the mounting conflict. Tashkent was well aware of the fact that peace could be restored in the long-suffering neighbouring land only by political means. But how could it be done?

Since May sick, wounded and hungry refugees had been pouring into Uzbekistan.

They were given some help, including money, and were sent back.

The authorities of the Uzbek republic had no other way out. The reason was not only in the growing hysteria of fundamentalists about its alleged interference in the affairs of a sovereign state but also in its desire to follow the commitments taken upon itself according to the international norms listed in the Helsinky Act on Security and Cooperation. It's one aspect of the question. On the other hand, what is no less important is the fact that there are about one million Tajiks libing in Uzbekistan. It's easy to imagine that between refugees driven from their native land and deprived of properties

and means of subsistence and local Tajiks there could arise complications and even more serious things. Suffice it to recall that the Azerbaijan — Armenian conflict had been developing in the same way, until it transformed itself into a direct armed action between them. The Uzbek leaders understood that anything like that should never be repeated, otherwise the whole region, with a population of 50 million, would be plunged into an abyss of destruction, death and suffering.

At the beginning of September, when the tragedy in Tajikistan had reached its climax and the number of those killed amounted to thousands, the President of the Republic of Uzbekistan held an urgent news-conference for reporters accredited in Tashkent. It was obvious how much the events in the neighbouring republic troubled the leader of Uzbekistan. Usually contained and calm, sometimes even ironic, on that September day he couldn't conceal his emotions. I. Karimov put forward his own programme describing the shortest way of stopping the fratricidal war. And he made Uzbekistan's position on that matter clear. What was it based on?

— "Only Tajiks themselves can and must solve this conflict", said Islam Karimov,—"Uzbekistan categorically favours non-interference in the affairs of that sovereign republic. But we can't stay aloof from the process taking place there.

The practically open border between Tajikistan and Afghanistan, where hundreds of thousands people are under arms, could create a new tight point in this large and densely populated region. That's why Uzbekistan stands for the shorterst possible solution of this conflict in a peaceful and civilized way.

As for refugees, Uzbekistan can't receive dozens of thousands of people. Of course, no one here remains indifferent to the problems of a fraternal nation. Our republic is ready to render any assistance it can normalize the neighbour's life. Our stand on this complicated problem is the same: Tajiks and Uzbeks living in Tajikistan are the full-fledged and equal citizens of that sovereign republic, and must observe its constitution and laws.

All attempts to fan up the conflict between nations may render the most awful turn to these events. There have been similar attempts before. Suffice it to recall the tragedy in the Osh region.

Islam Karimov was the first to ring the alarm. A pragmatic politician, he saw clearly the prospects of the further development of the civil war in that mountainous land and managed to predict the situation correctly.

Beginning with the May meetings the heads of the CIS in Tashkent, he had persistently urged their leaders and the world community to pay serious attention to the tragedy in Tajikistan and not to leave those people face to face with their tragedy. He repeated his appeal in Bishkek, Moscow and Helsinky... In his message to the UN Secretary General Dr. Boutros Gali in September, 1992, he wrote this:

"...It should be taken into account that any confrontation, clashes, or antagonism among large groups of people and nations have always had terrible consequences here, in Central Asia, no matter in what part of the region they happened.

For nearly half a year, the almost 50-million population of our country has lived with a presentment of a coming holocaust and has followed the events taking place in Tajikistan with deep anxiety.

The fighting goes on and on, and shots continue to be fired. Tension and confrontation between different groups are constantly growing. Innocent children, women and old people continue to die. The rights and freedoms of national minorities are being violated. They seek shelter in other countries.

Naturally, Tajikistan has the sovereign right to decide its home matters and determine the destiny of the country itself. However, to exercise their rights, the courageous, industrious and long-suffering people of that fraternal republic should have favourable external conditions. First of all, it's necessary to stop the flow of arms into this region".

This was followed by a statement of four presidents: Nursultan Nazarbayev, Boris Yeltsin, Askar Akaev and Islam Karimov, in which they made it clear that Kazakhstan, Russia, Kirghizstan and Uzbekistan would do their best to strengthen the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Tajikistan and ensure the security of the Southern border of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

One more explanation is due here. In his message to Dr. Boutros Gali Islam Karimov produced convincing arguments for the prevention of the territorial split of

Tajikistan. Why did the leader of Uzbekistan focus on this problem in particular?

This issue should be examined on a broader scale. The core of the matter is not the position of Leninabad residents. Being the most economically developped part of Tajikistan that region has traditionally gravitated towards Uzbekistan, which is explained not only by territorial proximity. Most inhabitant of the region are Uzbeks. At the peak of the confrontation in Dushanbe, the opinion began to be voiced more and more often that the region secede from Tajikistan. Two options were suggested, either the Leninabad region becomes completely autonomous, with more rights than even the Gorno-Badahshan Autonomous Region had; would it joins Uzbekistan. It's not difficult to imagine the possible consequences of such an act. That's why Islam Karimov rejected it categorically.

I. Karimov's consistent position and his political initiatives aimed at ending the civil war in Tajikistan as soon as possible did not remain unnoticed by the world community. Practically all the leading news agencies, newspapers and radio stations commented widely on the position of Uzbekistan's leader. Here are some of the comments:

The President of Uzbekistan I. Karimov warned against the spread of violence in Central Asia. The civil war in Tajikistan, he said, can lead to situations which could be more dangerous than in Nagorny Karabakh ("The Deutsche Welle").

The BBC said that assesing the events in Tajikistan, Islam Karimov, leader of the neighbouring Uzbekistan, described Islamic fundamentalism as a delayed action bomb, which could explode any minute now. "If the conflict is not localized, it can engulf the close-lying regions of Uzbekistan, bordering on Tajikistan where there is a great number of ethnic Tajiks who have recently raised the territorial issue.

One of the most dangerous factors has been repeatedly mentioned by Presidents of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan: extremism of the most aggressing political groups in Tajikistan could well disguise itself as Islamic fundamentalism ("Liberty").

The complicated situation in Tajikistan is worrying its neighbours and especially the Republic of Uzbekistan,

as relations between these two countries have been developing since the old times ("Ozodlik").

As Mr. Islam Karimov pointed out there will be no stability in Central Asia until peace is established in Afghanistan. This problem disturbs Uzbekistan very much as it's a neighbour of both countries, said the BBC.

On Islam Karimov's initiative and with active support from Boris Yeltsin and Nursultan Nazarbaev, additional military units have been sent to the Afghan-Tajik border, and the once inaccessible frontier began to acquire its former reliability... Assessing that action by the heads of sovereign states, the BBC said that Russian generals were now sure that both ways had been completely blocked. It was with this end in view that Russia and three Central Asian republics had sent military aid there. In the opinion of one frontier General, it has become impossible to cross the border for large groups. According to the head of Russian frontier troops, hundreds of Tajik Moslems were trained in the camps in North Afghanistan and then returned across the Tajik border".

Many problems concerning the civil war in Tajikistan, were to be resolved at the meeting of leaders of the CIS countries in Bishkek. However, the Deputy Premier of Tajikistan Usmon Davlat, who occupied that post after the confrontation in Shahidon and Ozodi Squares a staunch supporter of the ideas of the Democratic Party and the Islamic Party of Rebirth, tried to forestall the events. He told the mass media that the Republic of Tajikistan would send a delegation to the meeting but it would discuss only economic questions. He explained such a decision by voicing his opinion that the Commonwealth of the former Soviet republics was purely formal. And it was because of this, that the priority trend in the external policy of Tajikistan will be the development of relations will those neighbouring countries which are not CIS members. By this he reaffirmed the opposition's course on the towards rapprochement with the Islamic world.

The Tajik tragedy echoed painfully in the hearts of millions of people of different nationalities living in the vast Central Asian region. However many people were interested to know why Turkmenistan and its President

Saparmurad Niyazov had taken such a strange stand in the beginning?

Sharing everybody's concern and anxiety over the events in Tajikistan, the leader of Turkmenistan nevertheless reiterated that his sunny republic had chosen the way of non-interference into the affairs of other countries and that the main attention of the republic's authorities was focussed on settling their own socio-economic problems. If translated from the diplomatic language it meant that Tajikistan was far away and did not threaten Turkmenistan's peace.

As for the concern of the leaders of other republics of the region, it is quite explainable, because they are the closest neighbours of Tajikistan.

S. Niyazov, however changed his stand later, and it does him credit. It happened after the January meeting in Tashkent when the decision to create a new community of brotherly states of Central Asia was adopted. After this meeting Turkmenistan decided to render humanitarian aid to the people of Tajikistan.

On November 4, 1992, President of Uzbekistan Islam Karimov was ready to leave Tashkent. A small group of accompanying experts gathered in the waiting-room. They were to fly to Alma-Ata, but no one knew what kind of meeting they were going to attend. Alma-Ata met them with first snow. The motorcade headed in the direction of the world-famous Medeo. There, at the foothills of the Alatoo mountains the Presidents of Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Kirghizstan, the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan and the Foreign Minister of Russia Andrei Kozyrev gathered in a confortable governmental residence.

The meeting was strictly confidential. But a few experts and journalists who were admitted to it, knew that there was only one question on the agenda. It was normalization of the situation in Tajikistan, and ways of stopping bloodshed there.

The first statement was made by Nursultan Nazarbayev. The leader of Kazakhstan said that they had gathered at this urgent meeting because of the aggravating situation in Tajikistan. He also said that the fratricidal war when Tajiks kill Tajiks and hundreds of thousands of people were on the verge of extermination, it was an inconceivable thing in our enlightened and civilized century, and that people of Tajikistan needed concrete

help. He stressed the fact that they had discussed a wide range of problems concerning localization of the conflict. He also pointed out that Tajikistan was a sovereign state and it should make its choice itself what way of development it should follow. But this way shouldn't be stained with blood. It was suggested that the Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan Akbarsho Iskandarov convence a special session of the People's Deputies till November 20. Hujand was proposed as the venue because it was the most stable and calm towns in the republic. The deputies should be given an opportunity to state their opinion of the problem. The neighbours of Tajikistan, in their turn, were ready to give the necessary humanitarian aid to the country because it was not in their tradition to leave a neighbour alone with his tragedy.

Islam Karimov was more laconic in his speech: Uzbekistan is interested in stabilizing the social and political situation in Tajikistan. The blood of thousands and thousands of guiltless people, unprecedented genocide unleashed by the opposing groups — this is the tragedy of not only Tajiks but of the whole Central Asia. Uzbekistan is ready to render aid to their brothers. Winter is on the doorstep and hunger is inevitable. Despite our own difficulties, we are sending them provision and medicines, and if it is necessary we'll send teams of doctors. To my mind, the meeting in Alma-Ata made it possible to answer the main question: how to draw the republic out of the crisis. This must be done by Tajiks themselves and by the lawfully elected people's deputies.

Askar Akaev, as usual, only smiled and nodded his head approvingly, when the two other presidents were speaking. Andrei Kozyrev who is called "Mr. Yes" in the West for his readiness for concessions, was true to his principle this time as well.

— Russia is not indifferent to what is taking place in Tajikistan, the head of the Foreign Office declared. And it is difficult not to agree with President Karimov who always stresses the fact that the border between Afghanistan and Tajikistan is not defended. And this is a grave danger not only for the countries of the region but for Russia as well. We can't give up our long-standing ties with Tajikistan, and besides that, many Russian-speaking people live in this region.

And what about Akbarsho Iskandarov? He was listening to the speakers with strained attention. And in answer to the question what he thought of the Alma-Ata meeting, the speaker of the Parliament first began to thank the presidents for their concern over the events in his country and then said:

— The session in Hujand must define the future of the political system in Tajikistan. Everything possible should be made to put an end to the fratricidal war. I hope that the Parliament will get together in the Leninabad region till November 20. It's a good thing that observers from the sovereign countries of the Commonwealth will take part in it, because the opposition will be against the session of the Supreme Soviet.

Without staying in Alma-Ata for the traditional dinner, the participants in the meeting left the city that same evening. Islam Karimov left for Tashkent, Askar Akayev — for Bishkek, Akbarsho Iskandarov and Andrei Kozyrev aboard a Russian plane — to Dushanbe.

The neighbouring countries which promised to help Tajikistan had kept their promice. Kazakhstan sent bread to the bleeding country. Uzbekistan sent flour, sugar, macaroni, vegetable oil, rice and medicines. Teams of doctors were sent to the regions liberated by government troops and soldiers of the Popular Front because there were many wounded and emaciated people and besides that, an epidemic of typhoid had broken out in Tajikistan.

People of Uzbekistan took close to heart the tragedy of their neighbour. On the initiative of cultural centres that represented different nations and nationalities, an appeal to the governments and the peoples of Central Asia, was adopted. It urged them to create humanitarian funds to support the people of Tajikistan. People began to raise money and nobody stayed aside from this noble cause. Soon millions of roubles earned by people living in Uzbekistan were deposited on a special bank account. Soon two planes with clothes for children, provision, and medicines gathered by different national centres were sent to Dushanbe. Additionally there was help on the part of the state.

But this assistance was used as a pretext for all kinds of insinuations. Rumours began to be spread both in Tajikistan and abroads that the expansionist policy of Uzbekistan was aimed at establishing a new geopolitical

space where sovereign Tajikistan would be nothing more than a vassal.

What was it done for?

First of all it was necessary to distract public opinion from the real state of affairs and to threaten people with a new and hateful "elder brother".

Second, it was necessary to set the world public against humane and well-considered policy of Tashkent and Alma-Ata directed at stopping the fratricidal war. Such Tajik oppositionists as the leaders of the Democratic Party, the Islamic Party of Rebirth (IPR) and the clergy repeatedly declared that Tashkent and Dustum, the pro-Uzbek leader of military formations in Afghanistan, provided military groups in Kulyab with weapons, ammunition and money.

And in the third place, a well-tested "trumpcard" was used. It's a surprising thing, but the greater part of the mass media again began to quote excerpts from the book "History of Crude Demarcation" by Rakhim Masov.

But thousands of Tajiks, decieved by fundamentalists, who had already understood what an "Islamic state" really was like, didn't believe the fanatics any more.

Despite most pessimistic predictions, practically all the People's Deputies came to Hujand. A number of the representatives of the oppositionist parties arrived in that town situated on the banks of the Syrdarya River. It's quite natural that the leader of the clergy khodja Akbar Turajonzoda refused to participate in the work of the session.

Trying to escape punishment, he constantly changed his place of residence and at the same time, he directed the actions of the blood-thirsty fundamentalists.

Everything is peaceful in Hujand. Its streets and alleys are covered with golden leaves. On the calendar it is the end of November. Everywhere there are people: Tajiks, Uzbeks, Russians, Germans. On all corners there are armoured-carriers with machine-guns ready to open fire at any moment.

It is not coincidental. The People's Deputies have arrived to the centre of Leninabad region. The venue for holding Extraordinary 16th session of the republic's Supreme Soviet was not chosen at random. In Dushanbe there was war and bloodshed.

The People's Deputies remembered well the day, when fundamentalists took as hostages the members of govern-

ment, who had gathered for a conference in preparation for a world forum of Tajiks.

Everyone was anxious if there would be the necessary number of Parliamentarians to adopt a most significant decision on putting an end to the fratricidal war. One hundred and ninety eight Deputies constituting the quorum have arrived in Hujand.

The Palace of Culture on the collective farm named after twice Hero of Socialist Labour Urunkhojaev was chosen as the place for holding the extraordinary session of the Supreme Soviet.

It is a majestic building, a scaled copy of Petrodvorets near Saint-Petersburg. The same style, the same fountains, but without the famous Samson. There is a luxurious park in front of the building. There were machine-gunners under each tree, under each bush. Everyone was searched for arms before he reached the stairs. No exception was made either for journalists, or parliamentarians, or even the Prime Minister.

Such precautions were justified; for Islamic fundamentalists had declared that they would take their revenge in Hujand.

There were streamers on the facade of the building reading: "People's Deputies! You have arrived here to stop the bloodshed. There should be peace on the soil of Tajikistan!"

Before the session opened a decision was taken to form a conciliatory commission. The commission worked till evening, but it couldn't come to any agreement. Why?

Too much blood was shed on the soil of Tajikistan. Kulyabians didn't want to understand Pamirians, Harmers — Leninabaders, and Kurgan-Tyube residents — those of Dushanbe. A different result could hardly be expected. Nevertheless the session was opened.

Akbarsho Iskandarov, the Speaker of the Parliament, who had always been close to the Kazikalon, declared the session open. He was too worried to control the Parliament. It was manifested in everything. He made an unpardonable mistake: after a stormy voting he misplaced both the auditing and the drafting committees. He often hesitated, and made long pauses trying to find the necessary words.

During one of the intervals Moscow journalists got Rahmon Nabiev on his home phone. After his resignation his fellow-townsmen gave him a cool welcome. Weakness

in politics, which led to the civil war, is inadmissible and unpardonable!

Here is an excerpt from that conversation:

— Good afternoon, Rahmon Nabiyevich! You know, of course that a session of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic has opened in your native town today. Why haven't you been invited? You are the lawfully elected leader, who under threat of death signed resignation.

— I am surprised too. But there are certain rules of conduct, at least there should be some respect for the President. I hope that the Deputies will understand it. I have a lot to say to the People's Deputies. I don't feel guilty.

He hasn't understood anything, hasn't realized his mistake.

In the long history of the former Soviet Union, and of all the presently sovereign republics, it is difficult to find an other example of such a long and tense session of Parliament, as was held in the suburbs of Hujand. It witnessed everything: accusations, reproaches, demonstrative departures from the conference hall, curses and... tears! How could it be otherwise, if dozens of thousands were killed and hundreds of thousands deprived, of their homes and even motherland.

Shortly before that, or to be more exact, after the Extraordinary session of the Parliament was opened each side tried to score some extra points. The former Speaker Safarali Kenjaev, who, with his detachments, made an attempt to seize Dushanbe on October 24, declared this: "The session could not have been convened without our pressure on Iskandarov, when we wanted to occupy the capital by storming".

Dozens of innocent people died then. And after that Islamic fundamentalists staged real massacre in the city. And only the interference of the 201st Russian division which had blocked the approaches to the capital, prevented the "night of long knives".

The Kazikalon did not keep aloof either. It became known that on November 18, he had been at the Iranian Embassy in Moscow. Why namely there? Because an Iranian air company carries out direct flights via Baku to Teheran. Hoja Akbar Turajonzoda suddenly turned up on Dushanbe TV and announced, that the session was being held under military pressure and that it was extremely dangerous for "true Tajiks" to take part in it.

There is one interesting detail. After the Kazikalon's statement, an announcer without taking his eyes off the written text, read this: "In case of need, our detachments will clear the Gissar Valley within 4 hours". It was already the agony.

But the session continued, irrespective of the threats from fundamentalists. Sensing the feelings in the conference hall Akbarsho Iskandarov understood that he had already lost the speaker's post. When the question of Iskandarov's re-election was raised, the overwhelming majority of 141 against 54 voted for the re-election of this mountain messenger" from the post of Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of Tajikistan.

There was nothing Akbarsho Iskandarov could do. This henchman of the "Laali-Badahshon" movement who was actively supported by the Kazikalon, suffered a political defeat and left for his home town.

The country needed a new leader, able to solve all problems. Emomali Rahmonov, a 40-year-old Chairman of the Kulyab Regional Executive Committee, was elected the Speaker of the Parliament. He had occupied the post of the Chairman for only a month, and before that he had headed a collective farm. Many people were confused by this breath-taking career, but the People's Deputies of Tajikistan were of a different opinion.

"Though Emomali Rahmonov has no experience in politics, he compensates this shortcoming by his flexibility, principalness, well-balanced approaches, and if need be — by toughness".

This character sketch of the Parliament Speaker reveals his best qualities. Rahmonov has already shown that he is not going to play with the opposition, and that the power given to him is not a star that has fallen from the sky. Many people made attempts to recall his past activity as a party leader. But those were false accusations. The speaker has always been an economic executive, and never had anything to do with power structures as well as their milieu.

After many days in session, the Deputies decided to invite the ex-President Nabiev. He was met with silence. Having greeted the audience, he went to speak to Rahmonov tête-à-tête. Nobody except themselves knows what they talked about. May be, Nabiev hoped to win the Parliament over to his side, and the new speaker produced his conter-arguments. Eventually, the ex-President signed his resignation, the second one, but this time not at gunpoint. Later he addressed the session, speaking about his position incoherently, but did not admit his mistakes.

Yet, to many people Rahmonov's election was unexpected. Rahmonov broke the old tradition of electing the leader from the Leninabad region. He is from Kulyab, and he is categorically against fundamentalism. He respects the Moslem religion and understands concerns of common people. But the speaker draws a clear-cut boundary between Islam and its distortion — fundamentalism. The new leader favours the development of relations with the CIS countries, primarily with Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan and Russia.

Were there other candidates for the post? Surely. There was Prime-Minister of Tajikistan Abdumalik Abdullojonov. He is from the Leninabad region, and was Ministry of grain products, in his time. Later on he headed the concern "Non" (bread). He has broad and stable contacts in commercial structures.

"If our brothers had not rendered us assistance, especially Russia, Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the consequences of mass terror in Tajikistan would have been much more terrible", says E. Rahmonov. "The republic has been thrown back for decades in its development. It'll be very difficult to restore the destroyed economy by ourselves. The main task now is to stop bloodshed, achieve national reconciliation, confiscate arms, return the refugees back to their places of residence and stop the population's migration. This will require great efforts from everybody. But there is no other way out!"

The 16th session of the Supreme Soviet of the Republic of Tajikistan adopted important decisions. The main ones were to ask the Commonwealth member-states to bring peace-keeping forces into the region, to begin forming a national army, and to strengthen defence of the frontier.

It was decided to ask the Russian government to leave the 201st motorized-infantry division on the territory of the Republic.

Then there was a meeting of Defence Ministers of Central Asian states and Russia in border-line Termez. It was presided over by the Commander-in-chief of the CIS united armed forces Yevgeny Shaposhnikov, Aviation Marshal. Taking part in it was also Emomali Rahmonov.

— Now various parties and movements are putting forward demands to ban the interference of the republics of the former USSR into the affairs of sovereign states,— the Marshal says. The main stress here is laid on independence. But does the CIS army really interfere in the affairs of Tajikistan, where tens of thousands of people have been killed by most barbarous methods. We understand and take to heart the pain and anxiety of the republican leadership. It is true that there is no more the Soviet Union now, but centuries-old friendship among peoples remains, as well as feeling of brotherhood and mutual assistance, don't they? On our part, we'll do our best to stop the civil war in Tajikistan as soon as possible.

In December, the sessions of the Supreme Soviets of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan adopted decisions, meeting the request of the Parliament of fraternal Tajikistan to send a military contingent to maintain peace and ensure tranquility of citizens. The people's representatives of the neighbouring countries were unanimous in their opinion that it was necessary to fight together against the fundamentalism bringing nothing but bloodshed and violence to the people.

NO OTHER ALTERNATIVE: EITHER THE ABYSS, OR ASCENT TO THE TOP

All wars have a lot in common: blood, fires, and tears. Yet, total wars in which armies are involved with clearly defined enemies in trenches, are accepted as something more or less natural. But civil wars in which brother kills brother, and father kills son, are quite a different thing. And it was precisely such a war that took place in Tajikistan. I recall one episode. A wounded guardsman from Sangak Safarov's detachment was found in a cotton field by women from a nearby village. He was unconcious, blood was oozing out through his camouflage jacket pierced by a bullet. And all around him, there was unpicked cotton dropping to the ground like tears of national sorrow. Taking snow-white bolls of cotton from the bushes and removing seeds from them the women began dressing the wound.

The war in the once quiet and prosperous Tajikistan has taken such unbelievably savage forms, that against

such background the barbarity of medieval inquisitors looks like children's mischief. Whence is this cruelty?

It is practically impossible to find an answer to this question. However, the roots of the Tajik tragedy and mutal hatred of the people of the same nation are well known. In a civil war cruelty breeds more cruelty, blood asks for more blood, and murder arouses revenge. Such is the terrible dialectics of a fratricidal war. But how long can this vicious circle remain unbroken? Who and how can break it, and return people to their natural state? Man appeared on the Earth so as to do Good and to fight Evil.

Here is a confession of a field commander who is still rather young and who set before himself as the main aim of his life to settle accounts with his enemies. "This is Asia. You can't fight here wearing white gloves. There is only one way not to go mad here — it is to shed rivers of blood. Once you get used to it, you don't notice it any longer. And there is one more thing you should understand once and for all — your enemy is not worthy of walking on this earth. I understood it when I saw my family — my mother, wife and three children dead. And they were not just dead — before killing them, islamists did everything they wanted to them. Now when I get hold of an enemy, it is not enough for me to just kill him. I want him to be dying long and hard, losing first his ears, then his tongue, nose and fingers... While he screams, choking on blood, I see the corpses of my children with their stomachs stuffed with manure and the only thing I feel sorry about is that I am unable to prolong his tortures infinitely".

Isn't it a terrible confession? But today it is a reality. The war in Tajikistan, according to plans of its organizers, was to become an inter-regional one, not a civil but an inter-ethnic war. Central Asia, this tasty morsel on the map of the world, had long been drawing the attention of many countries. After the disintegration of the Soviet Union, with each republic gaining independence, the "reconstructors of the Universe" have fastened their eyes on it.

They resorted to different methods, from bribery and handouts to fundamentalists, to comprehensive economic projects of assistance to brethren-in-faith. For instance, Pakistan is ready to assign 500 mln. dollars for the completion of the construction of the Rangoon Hydro-

Power Station, the largest in the region, and to take part in building the Kara-Korum highway which gives the republics access to the ports on the Indian Ocean coast. Iran is ready at any time to give an advantageous credit of 50 mln. dollars and as one-time assistance, to supply 300 thousand tons of oil.

Afghanistan, indigent economically supplies Islamic fundamentalists with arms from "Kalashnikov" submachine-guns to "Stingers" rockets. It is clear that this is not free of charge. It's necessary to pay either by gold or by girls under 15. Older girls are not appreciated...

"Kill and eliminate the faithless, communist heretics, mercinaries, their henchmen and myrmidons. With Allah's will, you, brother-Moslems, will not grow tired of fighting atheists. We are on the path of a righteous, holy war against the faithless, and we shall stint nothing for assistance and cooperation". Such admonitions were constantly sent to Tajikistan, to the so-called fighters for faith. Naturally these "writings" were circulated in other countries of the region where the ideas of Islamic fundamentalism received support and understanding. All this is being done for the sake of the far-reaching plans of "reconstructors". According to them, the countries of Central Asia should join a new geopolitical alliance, a new empire whose name is Islam! Such is the final aim. But it'll take time to achieve it. And for the time being, it is necessary to "swing the walls" and to win over to their side more and more supporters. It's clear that direct interference will be interpreted negatively. So, other ways should be employed, and such a way has been found. The Democratic Party and the Islamic Party of Rebirth are reliable champions of the ideas of fundamentalists. And it is still early to say that the opposition in Tajikistan has suffered a full defeat.

It is well known that numerous bands retreated to the Tajik-Afghan border area. There they hid themselves in caves, well-equipped, and supplied with engineering communications, crammed with arms, munitions and foodstuffs delivered beforehand.

Iran, Pakistan and Afghanistan are looking especially closely at Gorny-Badahshan. And this is not coincidental. Large reserves of uranium, plutanium, wolfram and, molybdenum have been prospected here. Besides, this autonomous republic is being considered by them as new powerful base for the drug business. According to

specialists, with the disintegration of the USSR traditional drug-trafficking routes from South Asia to Europe underwent certain changes. Some new trails have already been laid through the Central Asian region and further on.

It's hard to think of better ways of drug-trafficking, provided by the present chaos in the CIS and practically disrupted borders of Tajikistan. Add to this new markets in the Russian and the Baltic regions, in the Caucasus and Eastern Europe. The absence of strict control and still "transparent" border are fully used by drug-traffickers as a reliable bridge for the transporation of the "white death", and for their own enrichment, too. Of course, they will not give up the established routes and thousands of assistances. The question is: are the international mafia structures interested in the stabilization of the situation in Tajikistan? The answer is "no".

Analyzing the origin of the civil war in Tajikistan, one can unwittingly come to one more conclusion: political provocateurs needed a strong drug to arouse people so effortlessly, drug their brains, turn them into an obedient crowd and force them to follow their schemes. In the current circumstances they realized that to achieve their own purposes, they must consolidate the nation, and subordinate it to one, common idea. This idea must be superior to their local, clan and other interests.

History has shown that for the past centuries the humanity didn't invent anything more effective than nationalism. And nationalism needs an enemy, an external one. Then it'll be a common enemy.

The ideologists of Tajik nationalism chose this way long ago. The enemy was presented in the form of a mythical Pan-Turkism of their neighbours. In the past few years they have been spreading the myth of a new "elder brother", whose role in the region was allegedly claimed by Uzbeks. This thesis reiterated by some scholars was picked up by some Russian newspapers.

These cosmopolite don't care about the reaction to their articles, which appear i some "independent" (evidently, independent of conscience) Moscow periodicals like toadstools after the rain. They don't care that the "Islamic Democrats" praised by them, have killed scores of thousands of people of different nationalities, and are instigating people for killing Uzbeks. They don't care for Uzbekistan's officials who have to remain silent in

response to the entreaties of ethnic Uzbeks entangled in the sanguinary conflict in Tajikistan.

Uzbekistan has neither the right nor the desire interfere in the internal affairs of a sovereign state, no matter how painful it is. Only the leaders of the Republic know the price of the intense moral forment. The marked card of "Uzbek expansionist aspirations" preparaed by somebody beforehand, was introduced into the well-staged political game at a proper time. Who was interested in it? We can only guess. It's obvious that certain forces craving for power were ready to make any sacrifice to achieve their aim. To their mind, this aim was worth any sacrifice. The destiny and lives of thousands of people were thrown into the furnace of political ambitions.

Allow me to quote the Kazikalon once again: "Let half of Tajiks die, but with the rest I'll build a truly Moslem state". If he treats Tajiks in this way, imagine his attitude to Uzbeks, Russians, Jews, Tatars and other people, living in Tajikistan. That was why mass terror was unleashed. Could it have been avoided?

No! Now we can say that the absolute paralysis of power brought the republic to a civil war. No other result could be expected. Rahmon Nabiev, in his attempt to reconcile "a sheep and a wolf" once said: "Independence and sovereignty were like a meteorite which fell on our heads".

The comparison is good. And the meteorite wasn't the newly-acquired freedom but the inability to use it reasonably. The vacuum, formed in the political sphere was filled by Islamic fundamentalists, headed by Turajonzoda.

They suffered a fiasco. People of Tajikistan and even the former ardent supporters of the "greens" understood that the way led by their religious tutors was the way to an abyss.

However it's early to say that tranquility and peace have been achieved in the republic. There are impressive facts, arguments and examples, testifying against it.

One of the most important reasons of the continuing war is the foreign political one. Quite a lot of influential forces in different states of the world have their own interests in this part of Central Asia. For instance, Iranian fundamentalists are eager to export the Islamic revolution to the neighbouring mountainous land, and they would like to make this aim a state policy of their

own country. Some Pakistani organizations would also like influence to Tajikistan with the help of some non-governmental religious societies like the "Islamic Society" and then spread their influence to other Asian states. The powerful Saudi Arabian Vahhabists are rendering economic, technical and financial aid to fundamentalist forces not only for more gratitude, to say nothing of the Afghan Mojaheds. They not only supply their "brethren-in-faith with their own arms, but also transport for them the lethal weapons from some other countries. Under the current circumstances, the only opportunity to stop this lethal stream is to close the border. Tajikistan can't do it itself. The only hope is its neighbours in this region and Russia. However, for the present the Russian authorities have taken a strange and dubious position. On the one hand they are for democracy. But on the other hand, having seen the threat of a spread of Islamic fundamentalism on its territory, they are trying to take the situation under control together with other countries.

In Tajikistan, the military-political situation remains complicated and contradictory, though there is a tendency towards consolidation of sound forces. The new authority is against any confrontation between different areas and regions. Probably, it was not coincidental that the Kazikalon laid his state namely on this confrontation. In the long run, it boils down to the struggle between clans, various religious and party groups. Most people don't accept the ideas of fundamentalists. But various tribal clans and mafia groups are striving for a larger space under the sun, and this is also reality. The weakness and conciliatory policy of the previous government also caused destabilization of the circumstance in the republic. The national military forces, which are in the stage formation, are not able to inflict the decisive defeat on the enemy. All this has a negative effect on common people most of whom do not understand what's going on.

After the 16th session of the Supreme Soviet of the republic and formation of a new government in the Parliament of Tajikistan, the Cabinet of Ministers, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the National Security Committee there are still many followers of the former leadership who support openly or secretly the Islamic Party of Rebirth. At the same time most heads of

ministries, law-enforcement agencies, courts, and the Procurator's Office are temporizing and don't hurry to take any measures to implement the decisions of the Supreme Soviet.

The representatives of the government and the Popular Front, who have unified against Islamic fundamentalism, cannot make up their minds as to how to distribute the leading posts.

At any rate, the old nomenclature that served equally loyally R. Nabiev, A. Iskandarov and now E. Rakhmanov, do not want any infringement on their interests.

Characteristically, ever since R. Nabiev was elected President of Tajikistan, most heads of the ministries and departments have held different posts with the Council of Ministries, the Supreme Soviet and other bodies. The most "viable" of them turned out to be representatives of the trade and procurement structures. The fact that Ya. Salimov was appointed the Minister of Internal Affairs, is an exception to the rule and a tribute to the current socio-political situation in Tajikistan.

Why is a considerable part of the ruling elite of Tajikistan playing a waiting game? Because, it doesn't intend to take responsibility neither for the past nor for the future. In such a situation it is difficult for the new leader of Tajikistan to untangle the "Gordian knot" of problems. However, the speaker has already begun to show his tough character. It's clear that he hasn't enough experience but he is enriching it day by day. E. Rakhmonov understands that he will hardly have any real powers without attracting young, capable, sincere and democratical-minded people to the republic's leadership. It will be impossible so stabilize the situation on the mountainous land without that.

This process can be considerably damaged by the increasing disagreement between commanders of the military formations of the Popular Front, who fought actively against Islamic fundamentalists, and this is only natural.

Some of the field commanders demand high ruling post for themselves, wishing to have unlimited power in their districts. Thus some commanders of most efficient formations of the Popular Front have actually assumed dictatorial functions on the territory of former Kurgan-Tyube region. Relying on military force, without taking into account the views of the local authority, they appoint

their own people to different post and dismiss those who do not please them.

We have already mentioned the special position of the Leninabad region on the political map of Tajikistan.

Possessing the greater part of the industrial potential of the republic, and remarkable natural resources, the authority of Hujand are trying to stand apart.

In the formation of the internal political situation in Tajikistan, Gorny-Badahshan is playing a great role. Back in December 1991, the session of the Regional Soviet of the People's Deputies decreed that the Autonomous Republic Badahshan be formed within Tajikistan. However, the events began have taken as different course there. Stabilization of the situation in the mountainous area, and the return to peaceful life will largely depend on the position of the Pamirians.

Due to specific conditions in Gorny Badahshan, economic relations play a considerable role there.

Possessing vast deposits of minerals and nearly 200.000 inhabitants, the region has to bring in practically all consumer and industrial goods. Unfortunately, it is as to a tested channel for the delivery of arms, ammunition, drugs and smuggled goods.

People of Gorny Badahshan haven't abandoned the idea of influencing the political course of the republic. This resulted in the formation of a new organization, the Popular Front of Badahshan. Its leadership includes the former Chairman of the Supreme Soviet of the republic A. Iskandarov and the Chairman of the movement "Laali Badahshan" Amirbek Atabekov.

Facts show that the new party does not direct its energy at stabilizing the situation in the long-suffering Tajikistan. The Islamic Party of Rebirth and the Popular Front of Badahshan are acting most energetically in the direction of Darvas on the Tajik-Afghan border, where stable channels of illegal delivery of armaments, military equipment and drugs have been established.

In the area controlled by the 66th border unit near Horog several ferries are functioning. Camps for refugees from Tajikistan where militants are selected and trained are being set up in the Darvaz district, Afghanistan. According to various estimates, armed formations of PFB number about 2000 persons. But this number is expected to be replenished by fundamentalist groups leaving the area of operations.

According to the mass media, they may receive assistance from one of the leading field commanders in the Afghan Badahshan, Abdul Basir Haledi. His armed detachments are stationed in mountain gorges, close to the Afghan-Tajik border. Of course, the Tajik government knows what situation is taking shape in that remote area.

So, the civil war may be resumed as soon as spring comes and snow melts on mountain trails. And probably, the first blow will be struck from the mountains. Afghanistan's experiene should not be forgotten.

Evidently, the army of the Islamic Party managed to retain its groups in spite of its defeats and losses in the battles with government troops and forces of the Popular Front. There are grounds to suppose that the civil war in Tajikistan can resume with greater force, and other states may also be drawn into it. Why? Because fundamentalists didn't give up their aims. Today they are mustering forces. And tomorrow... It is known from reliable sources that the main group of oppositionists has been led out of the Hatlon region into the territory of Afghanistan, where new groups are being formed. Mojaheds and instructors from other countries are taking an active part in it. Specialists on the use of heavy artillery and subversive and reconnaissance groups are being trained on the territory of Iran and Pakistan.

Their training is confined to three weeks, which will make it possible to have an armed formation of 5 to 6 thousand by the beginning of the planned operations.

Here are facts, that speak for themselves. Near the airodrome of the town of Kunduz, there is a camp for training Tajik militants. There are several hundred people in that camp. The combat training of "fighters for faith" is supervised by Amir Chugan. In the training centre they are consulted by advisers and instructors from Saudi Arabia.

The main subjects are the tactical and the fire training, the tactics of the guerilla warfare. At the same time, they are taught the basic principles of Islamic fundamentalism with the purpose of subsequent dissemination of its ideas on the territory of Tajikistan. All the trainees for secrecy purposes are dressed in Afghan uniforms.

In the province of Kunduz is actively functioning a committee of the IPR, headed by functionaries from Tajikistan.

On Hekmatiyar's orders 25 million afghani were sent there as financial aid. The committee has a radio station, which helps it maintain contacts with the leadership of the IPR and opposition leaders in Tajikistan. In the same way, preparations are underway in other places.

In the camps of Tajik's refugees in Afghanistan, young people are being actively recruited into fighting groups.

According to Tajiks journalists, close to the Popular Front, about two hundred people of Tajik and Uzbek nationalities have been selected by the CIA and sent to the USA for a two-year training course.

To all appearances, the operation under the code name "Retribution" is being planned by the leaders of the Tajik opposition in the spring of 1993. Operations will supposely begin along the entire length of the Afghan-Tajik frontier.

All forces of the IPR, as well as separate groups of mojaheds will be thrown into action. The direction of operations has been already determined. Of course, it is difficult to say today how the events will develop. Only a well-defended frontier can prevent the attack.

It's quite possible, that there will be provocations against other Central Asian states.

There are serious grouns for such suppositions.

It is no secret that the fundamentalists of Tajikistan intend to transform the civil war into a regional conflict and draw pro-Islamic forces of other states into it. In the South-Western regions of Kirghizstan, bases are being equipped and propaganda among the local population conducted.

According to some sources they exert considerable effort to distabilize the situation in the some parts of Uzbekistan. Political observers believe that spring and summer will be disquieting on the territory of the sovereign Central Asian states.

It is hard to imagine, what price can be paid by tens of millions of people living in this vast region in case if the blood-thirsty and in human plans of religious fanatics and their cynical tutors are realized.

The violent death of even one person is a great tragedy and an irreparable loss. And here the destiny of tens of millions of people is at stake.

It is hard to imagine, how far back the newly-independent states will be thrown.

In Tajikistan, the political and military confrontation of different clan groupings has already entailed a major socio-economic catastrophe.

This is testified by the figures and facts listed in the report of the Tajik government circulated at the beginning of 1993 by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. As a result of a prolonged blockade of the railway and highways, and absence of the necessary material-and-technical resources, as well as intensification of migration the republic's economic has been practically paralyzed.:ə:əThe total economic damage amounts to 200 billion roubles.

The total economic damage amounts to 200 billion roubles.

In 1992 industrial production dropped by 23%, the output of consumer goods reduced by 24.5% against the same period in 1991. The Kurgan-Tyube region, where fierce fighting took place, is in a specially deplorable position. In that region, industry failed to reach the target figures by more than 1.5 billion roubles worth of goods.

The Kurgan-Tyube clothes and cotton-spinning factories and the Nurek textile factory were most strongly damaged by destruction and fire. Three hundred tons of cotton fibre and nearly 70 tons of cotton yarn, as well as a lot of equipments were burnt by fire.

The republic's transport system was greatly damaged too. About 5 thousand automobiles were either stolen or destroyed. Twenty six trucks and passenger cars were put out of action. The sum total of damages in this sector amounts to about 4 billion roubles.

Extensive losses were inflicted on the republic's agriculture. The loss of farm produce and destruction of capital funds is worth about 29 billion roubles. Poultry-farming in the former Kurgan-Tyube region was practically wiped out, and the number of livestock sharply decreased. At least one billion roubles will be required to restore it to the level of the early 1992.

During the clashes between political groups suffered not only people but also buildings. According to government information, the total area of the burnt houses comes up to 600 thousand square metres.

The civil war has sharply aggravated the migration problem. There are more than 537 thousand refugees in the Republic. In Dushanbe alone the figure comes upto

120 thousand. Seeing no way out, people were leaving Dushanbe in great numbers. According to estimates, state expenditure on training new specialists will require not less than 3 billion roubles.

Of course, it's blasphemy to count the value or price of the people who have left this land of plenty. Think over just this one fact. Not a single person out of those who have left the republic did not even think of that a year ago. He or she dreamt of happiness of this soil and made plans for the future. But who cares about one single person today? Politicians think on a global scale, if they care for anyone's interests, those are the interests of whole nations, forgetting the fact that a nation — the notion they love so much to use — consists of millions of individuals.

The size and the scale of the damage done to the republic, continue to be estimated. Today it's quite obvious that the republic won't be able to cope with the task of restoration of national economy alone and can only rely on the assistance of the CIS other progressive states and international organizations. All these are links in one tragic chain. It is impossible to stabilize the situation in the republic without urgent and effective measures. The situation is very tense. Shorts can still be heard everywhere. In Dushanbe alone about thirty different armed groups of Islamic fundamentalists continue to operate. They kill supporters of legitimate authorities and terrorize the peaceful population of the republic.

It's very hard to detect these "flying detachments". After committing yet another crime, they go into hiding. And which is worth, they use the Popular Front as a guise.

Yet, despite its intimidation tactics, foundamentalism in Tajikistan has cut its own roots. Even the most zealous supporters of the Islamic Party of Rebirth are now asking themselves this question: who needed all that blood of innocent people and all those victims?

The opposition leaders have stained themselves with blood. It is hardly probable that they will found support ever again in Tajikistan. Today they will undoubtedly need new advocates. And they are being trained now a fresh "wave". Two new figures have lately appeared on the political arena. One of them is Khadji Said Kiyamuddin Gazi — a well-known Tajik poet. He actively supported the opposition and promoted its ideas. One of

the leaders of the Democratic party thus described the poet: "Hundreds of years ago, there lived a unique Cicero in Rome. Now the like of him has appeared in the Shahidon Square, and his name is Khaji Said Kiyamuddin Gazi!"

For his emotionality, eloquence and ability to inspire a crowd he has been nicknamed "people's general". This is flattering to the preacher of fundamentalism. He is now in Afghanistan, conducting "explanatory work" among Tajik refugees. The poisonous seeds of nationalism they sowed in the souls of young people, have already yielded a harvest — a nationwide massacre. There appeared some other ideologists, promulgating the building of "a great Tajik State", among the intellectuals, including Dodojon Atovulloev, Salimi Ayubzod and "the mother of the nation" Sochidai Mirso. Through the mass media, they urged people to awaken and, explained to them the ideas of the Democratic Party and the Islamic Party.

One thousand years ago, an outstanding Tajik poet Firdousi wrote this:

Man happens to be the last link in the chain,
Displaying best qualities time and again.
Like poplar he towers, proud and rich,
Endowed with intellect, eloquent speech.
A vessel of wisdom and reason he is,
By far dominating the world of speechless.

What beautiful words about the lofty destiny of Man.

Fundamentalists wanted to subordinate millions of people and build a state of the Iranian type, turning its population into speechless slaves of fanatical ideology. They have failed to do so. But fundamentalists aren't going to give up their perfidious plans.

They don't care two pins for ordinary people. They crave for power. And they will do everything possible to achieve their purpose. That's why the only way out of the situation is to join forces, and thus ensure stability and peace in the Central Asian region.

INSTEAD OF THE EPILOGUE

It seems, with this we could finish. But it's too early to do so. According to different data the civil war in Tajikistan took a toll of about 50 to 70 thousands lives. Nobody can give the exact figure of those killed during

the war. A great number of weapons (somewhere from 20 to 80 thousand guns) has accumulated in the republic. And though government forces are doing a good deal to confiscate all weapons, and a lot of laws prohibiting possession of weapon have been adopted, no one is in a hurry to hand over their guns.

In this book we have repeatedly tried to raise the question of what had brought about this great tragedy in Tajikistan. We produce a great number of defails about the preconditions for the blood-letting civil war in the republic. But despite those tragic developments it was quite possible to avoid the civil war.

Every sovereign state chooses its own way of development. It should correspond to the peoples wishes and expectations, and should be based on the history of the people, and local conditions. The events described in the book once again showed that we should be firm and vigilant.

One shouldn't fall under the influence of some politicians who are able to divert the country from realizing its purposes and cause much suffering to the people.

Economy should always have priority over politics, it should be free of ideology. Unfortunately, it wasn't so in Tajikistan. Political ambitions of leaders of different groups prevailed and caused bloodshed.

In order to carry out their insidious plans, fundamentalists chose the most difficult transitional period in the history of the young sovereign state, when the old system had already been destroyed and the building of a new one has just begun. The authority of the republic wasn't able to stand this severe test and showed its full insolvency. They couldn't take the situation under control, made different kinds of concessions and compromises, were demoralized and crashed by the opposition.

The sanguinary events in the mountainous land have once again shown vividly that it's not sufficient to issue good democratic laws. First of all, the most important thing which is to be down at present is to make all people keep strictly to the established order and observe the laws. It is arbitrariness and lawness that have caused death of thousands of people in Tajikistan.

Putting forward populist slogans, playing on the peoples' feelings, fundamentalists forced them to take up arms. If the social policy of the state structures were

purposeful and well thought over, the tragedy could have been avoided. But as it was, people's life became harder and harder from day to day. In fact they didn't see any goal in their life. And the political adventures were quick to take the advantage of the situation.

The events in Tajikistan have once again shown vividly that the transition to a market-oriented economy in the Central Asian region should be carried out gradually, step by step, not by fits and starts.

With the help of bloody terror, fundamentalists wanted to build an "Iranian-style state", but they failed to. Moreover, they couldn't have succeeded in doing so. The people didn't follow the fanatics way. But this freedom was gained at great sacrifice to Tajik people.

The Tajik tragedy should become a frightful and warning lesson to millions of people, and to each of us.

But there is still a long way to the happy end. Such is reality.

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Гапур Хайдаров, Максуджон Иномов

ТАДЖИКИСТАН:
трагедия и боль народа

На английском языке

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